

# The African Communist

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## **THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST**

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**No 77 Second Quarter 1979**



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## **EDITORIAL NOTES**

# **CHINA JOINS HANDS WITH IMPERIALISM!**

The recognition of China by the United States Government has brought in its wake the most dangerous threat to world peace since the Munich agreement which preceded the outbreak of the second world war. This was made clear by the visit to the United States last February of China's Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping, who used the platform provided for him by President Carter to call for common action by the United States, Western Europe, Japan and China to combat what he described as 'Russian expansionism'.

U.S. recognition of China was long delayed. The normal criterion for diplomatic recognition is de facto exercise of power by any government — an unquestionable fact in China accepted by the

rest of the world for the last 30 years. The US, however, withheld recognition for political reasons, to express its hostility to the great Chinese revolution, and its determination to prevent the consolidation of the socialist system in China. US hopes of restoring China to the orbit of capitalism and imperialism were reflected in the recognition of the puppet regime in Taiwan, as well as in a succession of CIA plots to overthrow the Chinese government and assassinate its leadership.

The fact that the United States has decided that the time has now come to waive its objections to the Chinese government and grant its formal recognition does not in any way indicate a change of heart on the part of the US administration. It is not that President Carter is more liberal, more tolerant, more peace-loving than any of his predecessors — after all, the first overtures to China were made by President Nixon, that arch-exponent of reaction and the double-cross. No, what has changed has been the Chinese Government, which has abandoned all pretensions to be following the line of Marxism-Leninism in building communism, has abandoned the fight to end capitalist exploitation of the human and material resources of the world and has openly thrown in its lot with the forces of imperialism, neo-colonialism and racism.

We live in the era of the transformation of the world from capitalism to communism, a prospect opened up by the great Russian revolution of 1917, and greatly enhanced by developments since the second world war — the consolidation of the power of the socialist countries, the dismantling of colonialism and the achievement of independence by so many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the triumph of the revolution in Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia — yes, and China itself. In all corners of the globe imperialism is being driven back, and the forces of national liberation and of socialism are on the advance.

At the heart of this mighty movement of progress towards tomorrow's communist world stand the people of the Soviet Union, led by the CPSU, who have braved counter-revolution, civil war, famine, the horrors of the second world war and the rigours of the cold war in recent decades to hold aloft the banner of proletarian internationalism. To say this is not to make a model or a fetish of the



Soviet Union, nor to ignore the faults and errors of its history to which the CPSU has itself drawn attention, but to acknowledge a fact of life — that the Soviet Union is the rock on which rests the whole anti-imperialist structure of the world today. Take away this rock and what will happen to the anti-imperialist cause, to the cause of socialism throughout the world?

It is to the everlasting credit of the Soviet people and the CPSU that they have stood firm in defence of proletarian internationalism even though often at great cost to themselves. The living standards of the Soviet people could have been much higher had they not given so much in support of the principles for which their own revolution was made; they never hesitated to help others whose need was greater than their own. When the United States stopped fuel deliveries to Cuba, it was only the Soviet Union which could and did come to Cuba's aid. When the United States closed its markets to Cuban sugar, it was again the Soviet Union which bought up the crop, even though it had no lack of sugar of its own. Help with the military aid, science and technology required to enable Cuba to resist outright US aggression was again provided by the Soviet Union. Acknowledging this debt on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Cuban revolution last January, Fidel Castro said: 'I can tell you from our own experience that the Cuban revolution could not have survived without international revolutionary solidarity'.

And he added: 'I will give you another example: Angola. Without international solidarity, the Angolan revolution would have been crushed by the South African racists and imperialism. I can give you another example: Ethiopia. Without proletarian internationalism, imperialism would have drowned in blood and destroyed the Ethiopian revolution. Without proletarian internationalism, the Vietnamese could not have inflicted a defeat on US imperialism.

'There is virtually no country which could advance its revolution without international support, because all were in need of it at some point. China, too, was in great need of it. China received tremendous assistance from the Soviet Union: in weapons, during the war of liberation, assistance in developing the industrial base in the years of the revolution, and also in checking imperialist aggression, because I am sure that, but for the Soviet Union, the imperialists would have



mounted an aggression against China in the early days of the revolution'.

And Cuba herself, the recipient of so much aid, has not hesitated to come to the assistance of others in the throes of revolutionary struggle — in Angola, Ethiopia and elsewhere. And just as aid from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries is not limited to weapons, so Cuba has provided material and technical assistance to other developing countries in Africa and Asia; though short of hospitals herself, she is even helping to build a hospital in Vietnam.

### **Our Debt**

We who are fighting for national liberation in our countries know the value of the aid and support we receive, both moral and material, from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Which is not to say that we would not fight without them, that if there were no Soviet Union there could be no revolution anywhere. But our task would become immeasurably more difficult, and the time-span of the revolutionary process immeasurably lengthened, if the factor of proletarian internationalism were to be omitted from the political equation.

'Proletarian internationalism', said Castro, 'is a cornerstone of Marxism-Leninism. I do not think anything can justify abandonment of the principles of proletarian internationalism. I think that proletarian internationalism is the most remarkable feature of Marxism-Leninism, of socialism, and one would say the revolutionaries' most noble quality'.

And the time has come to ask: in what way do the Chinese leadership demonstrate the principles of proletarian internationalism? Nowhere in the world today is the revolutionary process assisted by the Chinese leadership. On the contrary, everywhere the Chinese leadership makes common cause with the enemies of revolution, with the imperialists, racists and fascists. In Chile, Angola, Ethiopia, wherever the people stand, weapons in hand, fighting against imperialism and reaction, they find ranged against them the leadership of the Chinese party. And it is in opposing the Vietnamese revolution that the Chinese leadership has plumbed the depths of degradation. Even during the course of the 30-year-long war which the heroic Vietnamese people had fought to

win the right to self-determination and independence about which the Chinese leadership is constantly prating, that self-same Chinese leadership was hindering the flow of assistance from the Soviet Union which was essential to throw back United States aggression. And no sooner had Vietnam driven out the US invaders and their puppets than the Chinese leadership began to provoke conflict on the Vietnam-China border, and incite and arm its puppets in Cambodia to follow a similar course of provocation and aggression. In pursuit of its own crazy politics, the Chinese leadership eventually sent its own armies across the Vietnam border.

In the name of what Marxist-Leninist principle is this policy of international opportunism and piracy being conducted by the Chinese leadership? When last did the Chinese leadership do anything to help the world struggle against capitalism and imperialism? When last did the Chinese leadership carry out its communist obligations in terms of the principle of proletarian internationalism? Time was, in the days of Mao, when the Chinese leadership was prepared to bracket the Soviet 'revisionists' with the American 'imperialists' as enemies of world revolution. But now even that mask has been dropped, and the Chinese leadership has totally abandoned the mighty cause of revolution and entered the ranks of the counter-revolutionaries side by side with the imperialists. Whoever is the friend of my enemy is my enemy, says the Chinese leadership. And this has made the Chinese leadership the enemy, not only of the international communist movement, but of the whole anti-imperialist movement. Echoing their imperialist allies, the Chinese leadership now brands all forms of indigenous revolution as 'Soviet expansionism'. No independent African country, no national liberation movement, which receives aid from the Soviet Union can count the Chinese leadership amongst its friends. That privilege is reserved for Pinochet, Nimeiry, Jonas Savimbi, Holden Roberto, British Foreign Minister Owen, ex-President Nixon, President Carter and his evil genius Brzezinski.

### **A National Deviation**

It is precisely because the Chinese leadership have abandoned the principle of proletarian internationalism and substituted their own brand of petty-bourgeois nationalism that they have become

acceptable to the imperialists. Carter junkets with Chinese Vice-Premier Deng because he no longer regards him as a threat to the interests of the United States and its multi national corporations, because he realises he can use him in the fight against the real forces of revolution throughout the world. China is attractive to imperialism not only as a market now wide open for foreign investment but also as a recipient of foreign military aid which will be directed against the Soviet Union. We are constantly told that President Carter was gravely embarrassed by the violent anti-Sovietism of Deng throughout his 10 days in the US, fearing its effect on the negotiations for another SALT agreement. To the outside world, Carter presented a visage of smug self satisfaction, and if he was embarrassed, he never uttered a word of protest, either in public or in private. The truth is the imperialists would like nothing better than a full-scale conflict between the Soviet Union and China, knowing full well that the only beneficiary of such a conflict would be the forces of imperialism.

In a recent open letter to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the general secretary of the CPUSA, Gus Hall, wrote,

'Opportunism is a dead end street. History is indeed a stern teacher. For the working class, the main lesson is that unity and struggle is a precondition for victory. Grovelling at the feet of the corporations, or of world imperialism has never resulted in any lasting victories. The class struggle on the world scale, between world capitalism and world socialism, is no exception to this rule'.

And Hall quoted the following prescient comment of Liu Shao-chi on 'Internationalism and Nationalism' in 1954.

'If one follows the bourgeois nationalist concept of the nation . . . opposes the Soviet Union instead of uniting with it, opposes the People's Democracies instead of uniting with them, opposes the Communists, the proletariat and the people's democratic forces in all countries instead of uniting with them, opposes the national liberation movements . . . instead of uniting with all the oppressed nations . . . then one will of course unite with the United States and other imperialists, will of course line up with the imperialist camp, will of course fail to achieve national liberation, will never accomplish anything in the cause of socialism, will of

course make one's nation prey to the deception and aggression of the United States and other imperialists, with the result that one's own nation will lose its independence and become a colony of the imperialists'.

The danger of the policy of the present Chinese leadership is not only that socialism in China may be betrayed to the enemy, not only that the cause of world socialism may be undermined, but that a world war may be unleashed from the ashes of which no one can emerge the victor. The course being followed by the present Chinese leadership threatens the future not only of the socialist cause but of humanity itself.

We have throughout stressed that our quarrel is with the present Chinese leadership because we are convinced that they do not reflect the interests of the great Chinese people who will sooner or later realise that they have been led along the path to disaster. But recent developments make it clear that something must be done, and done quickly, if that disaster is to be averted. The whole world progressive movement must now unite to defeat the conspiracy which is being set up against them by the Chinese leadership in alliance with the imperialists.

And, if we may say so, we think the time has come for those in the progressive movement who think that they can gain support by distancing themselves from the Soviet Union to realise that proletarian internationalism is not a swearword but the only guarantee of the ultimate triumph of the revolutionary cause and the permanent defeat of imperialism and the capitalist system from which it sprang.

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## **REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT**

'The living bourgeoisie is prepared to go to any length of savagery, brutality and crime in order to uphold dying capitalist slavery', wrote Lenin in *Pravda* in 1913. 'And a more striking example of this decay of the *entire* European bourgeoisie can scarcely be cited than the support it is lending to *reaction* in Asia in furtherance of the selfish



aims of the financial manipulators and capitalist swindlers. Everywhere in Asia a mighty democratic movement is growing, spreading and gaining in strength. . . . *Hundreds* of millions of people are awakening to life, light and freedom. What delight this world movement is arousing in the hearts of all class conscious workers, who know that the path to collectivism lies through democracy! What sympathy for young Asia imbues all honest democrats!

The terms of reference have changed a bit since Lenin's day. Europe has been replaced by America as the main bastion of imperialism and neo colonialist exploitation. And among the victims of oppression the peoples of Africa and Latin America can be added to those of Asia with whose struggle the Bolsheviks were preoccupied at that time. For the rest, how aptly Lenin's remarks describe the movements of national liberation which are sweeping through the dependent world today. Everywhere the frontiers of colonial domination are being driven back, the struggle of the peoples is surging forward irresistibly. In Vietnam, Kampuchea, Afghanistan, Iran, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, the bastions of imperialism and anti Sovietism have been toppled, and the millions of the formerly enslaved express in the streets their hatred of the foreign exploiter and their passion for liberty.

Nothing quite like the phenomenon of Iran has been witnessed in our generation. Here was a country ruled by a feudal autocrat, aided by the foremost powers of the west, whose people had been subjected for decades to the all the orgiastic horrors of secret police rule, plus the overwhelming might of an ever growing army — here in this country specially selected and buttressed by the imperialists as the upholder of 'law and order' in Southern Asia, the guardian of the Persian Gulf, and a reliable base for all manner of activity directed against the Soviet Union, the people decided they had had enough. From one end of the country to the other they rose in their millions, concentrating all their hatred against the Shah as the personification of their exploitation and degradation, their subjection to the dictates of the western powers and the multi-national corporations. At first almost totally without weapons, armed for the most part with sticks and stones, they grappled with the army and the police. Though shot down in their thousands, they still came forward, showing such

invincible courage and determination that eventually it was the nerve of the army which cracked, and the resident corps of US advisors and agents was compelled to advise the Shah to step down in the hope that with his departure something could still be saved from the wreckage. Within weeks the Bakhtiar regime was also sent packing and the initial phase of the revolution was over.

What kind of regime emerges in Iran remains to be determined. The sources of social and class conflict are by no means ended, but one thing is certain: the old order can never be restored. The power of the people, once felt and expressed so forcefully, can never be taken from them. The Shah, with the third biggest military force in the capitalist world at his disposal, could not defend his palace against their wrath. No outside intervention can succeed in propping up the discredited Peacock Throne.

Nor will Iran ever again play the imperialist game in international politics. In the face of the people's resistance, the post-Shah regime was forced to withdraw from the CENTO alliance, the Southern Asia counterpart of NATO, and to announce that no further Iranian oil would be supplied to either Israel or South Africa. Arms orders with the US and Britain were cancelled. The opposition National Front openly stood for non-alignment and rejection of imperialism.

For the Botha regime the collapse of the Shah has been an unmitigated disaster. Iran not only supplied South Africa with 90 per cent of its oil imports, but also had a 17.5 per cent investment in South Africa's National Petroleum Refinery (NATREF). South Africa's exports to Iran increased from R30.4 million in 1973/74 to R90.9 million in 1976/77, mainly base metals, engineering equipment, food, timber, cars, building materials and technology. Imports from Iran totalled only R1.39 million in 1976/77 excluding of course oil, for which no figures are available. Trade between the two countries had expanded steadily and South Africa hoped to have a big stake in Iran's future development.

### **Military Connections**

There was an aspect of the relationship with Iran, moreover, which went further than mere trade. In 1973 South Africa's expert in counter-insurgency warfare, Gen. C. A. Fraser, was appointed South

African Consul General in Iran, and among Iranian visitors to South Africa in recent years have been top figures in the Iranian military and naval establishment. In 1974 the Shah of Iran stated in an interview published in *Jeune Afrique* that he considered Iran's links with South Africa to be vital to his country and he would not be deterred by the opposition of African countries to the apartheid regime. Last year he even refused to see a deputation from the OAU which wished to press him to suspend oil exports to South Africa. In 1974, following a visit by the former South African Minister of Mines and Health Dr Carel de Wet, to several Middle East countries, South Africa's Minister of Economic Affairs, Senator Owen Horwood announced that South Africa and Iran planned to strengthen their ties, especially in the fields of nuclear energy, petroleum, mining and trade. On January 29, 1979, the *Johannesburg Star*, commenting on Chinese concern about the future of Iran, said, 'Pretoria and Peking had one thing in common — the now departed Shah was their best friend in the Middle East'.

Clearly, if unofficially, South Africa was also a party to the CENIO conspiracy which was directed not only against the Soviet Union but against all forms of progressive social change in Asia and Africa, and now this centre piece of the imperialist and racist plot against the people has come crashing to the ground. It is a shattering blow from which the imperialists and racists will find it hard to recover.

### **Maximum Unity**

The mechanics of the Iranian revolution will be studied for years to come. If we know too little now to make a detailed assessment, one factor stands out above all others — the victory of the people was based on the widest unity of the anti-feudalist and anti-imperialist forces. Workers, Muslims, intellectuals, the patriotic bourgeoisie, the peasantry found a common platform of struggle and allowed nothing to distract them. The National Front which led the people's opposition was made up of such groups as the Oil Workers' Strike Committee, the Writers' Association, the Jurists' Association, the Teachers Union and the Government Employees' Syndicate, as well as several progressive and nationalistic groups. The main religious force connected with the uprising is the Shi'ite Muslim sect, which

the Tudeh Party, the party of Iranian Communists, declared was 'playing a totally progressive role' and with which the Party was attempting to 'develop a common language'. The new secretary of the Tudeh Party, Nureddin Kayanouri, in an interview at the end of January, said that despite being underground since 1949, the party had never lost touch with the Iranian working class which now numbers 3 million and has a strong political consciousness 'We also have considerable support among the intellectuals, the lower middle class and the national bourgeoisie, the bazaar merchants — in short all those not directly involved with monopolistic imperialist capitalism'.

It was this concentration on the factors which united them, and the suppression, albeit perhaps temporary, of the factors which might have divided them, which enabled the opposition forces in Iran to build up their overwhelming strength.

Similarly in Kampuchea we might point to the fact that it was a similar broadness of approach which enabled the National United Front for National Salvation to win success earlier this year. Its initial appeal to the people called on 'all fellow Kampucheans of all nationalities and all walks of life, including those living abroad, old and young, men and women, regardless of political views and religious beliefs, to close ranks under the banner of the Kampuchea National United Front for National Salvation and rise up, millions as one, to overthrow the dictatorial, militarist and genocidal regime headed by the nepotist and bloodthirsty Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique. This is the only way to save our people, our country, and ourselves. Only in this way can we bring peace and genuine independence to our country, and freedom, real democracy and happiness to our people'.

The Front, listing the crimes of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique, stressed the damage it had done to all sections of the people. 'They have trampled underfoot all traditions, all the good customs and habits of our people, and committed acts of vandalism against our nation's ancient culture. They have banned freedom of religion, organised forced collective marriages, dislocated families, and debased our nation's habits and customs. They have destroyed pagodas and temples of Buddhism, an ancient state religion of Kampuchea, and have forced monks and nuns to return to secular life. They have destroyed Hinduism, exterminating the Champa



nationality. They have closed almost all educational establishments, from primary schools to universities. They have forced all children 13-14 years of age to give up studies and enrol in the army to serve their interests'.

In the face of this immense national disaster, provoked by a Chinese-style and pro-Chinese 'cultural revolution', the Front was able, through the broadness of its appeal, to mobilise the mass of the Kampuchean people in struggle and achieve a rapid and overwhelming victory.

These experiences of our fellow revolutionaries in Iran and Kampuchea emphasise once again the need for revolutionaries to eschew sectarianism, self-righteousness and exclusiveness, make ourselves and our movement the instrument of the masses, seek always to unite and never to divide all sections and classes of our people who are genuinely working for the overthrow of the evil apartheid regime. The Communist Party is the party of the working class — a vital factor in the South African revolution — but our party is also a part of the wider liberation movement which is carrying through the national democratic revolution for the aims set out in the Freedom Charter, under the leadership of the African National Congress. There is need for the closest harmony and mutual confidence in our relations with our allies and potential allies in the South African revolution if we are to succeed in overcoming the strength of the enemy.

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## **TEN YEARS OF STRUGGLE**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the historic Morogoro conference of the African National Congress held from April 25 to May 1, 1969 — a conference described by this journal in its issue No. 38 of that year as 'perhaps the most remarkable, critical and decisive in the long history of the A.N.C. which began in 1912'. That conference laid down the lines on which the unity of the struggling peoples of South Africa could be established to secure the overthrow of the evil system of apartheid and white domination, and the achievement of people's power on the basis of the principles set out in the Freedom Charter.

The report of the conference in *The African Communist* No. 38 continued.

'More than seventy delegates came to Morogoro. Present among them were veterans of the struggle, personified by the towering presence of 'Uncle J. B.' Marks. There were the emissaries who had carried the message of the A.N.C. to every corner of the five continents, who had exposed apartheid mercilessly at the United Nations and won solidarity for our people at innumerable meetings in Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America. Present too for the first time as fully participating delegates and not only as bearers of fraternal messages — were outstanding leaders of the partners of the Congress Alliance; the Indian and Coloured People's Congresses and the revolutionary working class movement, tried revolutionaries of the calibre of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, Reg. September and Joe Slovo.

'But above all, Morogoro was a Conference of the fighting youth of South Africa, delegations from the various encampments of the liberation army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and among them men who had seen action at Wankie and other engagements of the ZAPU-ANC military alliance against the joint forces of the Smith and Vorster regimes, who had seen the self-styled white 'supermen' turn tail and run, and who knew that victory can and shall be won. It was their presence, their mood of revolutionary urgency, their voice and their demands which prevailed at Morogoro, their insistence on priority for the armed struggle and the mobilisation of all revolutionaries at home and abroad, their demand for changed structures to meet the needs of the new phase of the revolution, for new and higher standards of political and personal conduct of all in the movement'.

The overwhelming and unanimous will of the Morogoro conference was for unity in the ranks, for rededication to the ANC and its dynamic and capable leader Oliver Tambo, for determined concentration on the central task — the development of the armed struggle, the organisation of the revolution to free our country. The conference affirmed 'the necessity to integrate all oppressed national groups and revolutionary forces and individuals under the banner of the A.N.C.' and instructed the National Executive Committee to work out the means by which this could be done so as to mobilise all

revolutionaries in functioning units of the ANC. The conference created a Revolutionary Council representative of all national groups and revolutionary forces in our country and charged it with the task of intensifying the armed struggle and the full mobilisation of the masses in support of the revolution.

The most significant achievement of the conference was the broadening of the conception of African nationalism. Quite correctly, the conference reaffirmed that 'the main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group — the African people', but stressed that the qualities of African nationalism did not stand in conflict with the principles of internationalism. On the contrary, African nationalism could now confidently draw into its ranks all sections of the population dedicated to the overthrow of white domination and prepared to abide by the programme and principles of the ANC.

Furthermore the conference declared that the national struggle was now taking place 'in a new kind of world — a world which is no longer monopolised by the imperialist world system, a world in which the existence of the powerful socialist system and a significant sector of newly liberated areas has altered the balance of forces, a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the element which makes such control meaningful — economic emancipation'.

The struggle was also happening in a new kind of South Africa, a South Africa in which there was a large and well developed working class whose class consciousness was highly developed and whose political organs and trade unions were 'very much part of the liberation front'.

Just how accurate the Morogoro conference was in its analysis of the course of events can be gauged by the fact that many of the wishes it expressed have already come to fulfilment. Ten years after pledging solidarity with its brothers in arms in Vietnam and the Portuguese colonies, the ANC can now join in the celebrations of their independence. The struggle against imperialism, racism and neo-colonialism still continues, but the ANC has the endorsement of history that it is working on the right lines and that victory is realisable in the foreseeable future.

Naturally enough, there were elements in the ranks of the liberation movement who could not accept the new vision of the Morogoro conference. In his closing address comrade Tambo warned against them

'These are the orders to our people, to our youth, our army, to every soldier. These are the orders to our leaders. The order that comes from this conference is *close ranks*. Wage relentless war against disruptors and enemy agents! Defend the revolution against enemy propaganda, whatever form it takes! Be vigilant comrades. The enemy is vigilant. Beware the wedge-driver! Men who creep from ear to ear, driving wedges among us who go round creating splits and division. Beware the wedge driver! Watch his poisonous tongue!

Some of the wedge drivers and dissidents have defected from our ranks in the years since Morogoro, some have been driven out but the movement is the stronger for their going, its vision clearer, its resolve fortified. Today we can still look back on that conference as a turning point and a beacon and renew our pledge to carry out its decisions in the spirit in which they were adopted, confident in the justice of our cause, the strength of our weapons, the reliability of our allies, the inevitability of our final victory.

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## **A SAD LOSS**

*The African Communist* regrets to announce the death on December 28 1978, of comrade Ellis Bowles, a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain who for many years was the London agent for our journal. Comrade Bowles, born into a family every member of which eventually joined the Communist Party, played a prominent part in the working class movement of his country both as Communist Party member and leading official of his trade union. A compositor by profession (he worked on the *Daily Worker* and the *Morning Star*), he visited our country in the late 1930s, and it was his contacts with our party and our people at that time that led to his life long devotion to our cause and his selfless service to our movement. Until we opened our own office in London, comrade



Bowles was our main channel to the outside world, and the reliability and conscientiousness with which he performed his task was of the utmost assistance to us at a very difficult period in our history. We would like to take this opportunity to express our grateful appreciation for all he did for us, and to convey to his family and comrades our heartfelt condolences on their sad loss, which is also our own.

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## The International Year of the Child

# CHILD GENOCIDE IN SOUTH AFRICA

by Joyce Lenong

The United Nations has declared 1979 the International Year of the Child. This is a call to the world to renew its concern for children.

It was exactly 20 years ago in November 1959 that the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted what was later to become THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

I would like to examine some of the 10 principles of the declaration in relation to the conditions of black children in South Africa with special reference to health, education, family life and political repression.

The preamble said in part 'Mankind owes the child the best it has to give'.

### *Principle I*

*The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration  
All children without exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to  
these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of*

*race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family*

This principle is in direct contrast with what happens to children in South Africa. Black children are discriminated against on the basis of colour, race, nationality and politically. A child born of black parents is denied political freedom, free education, adequate health care and good nutrition.

*Principle 4*

*The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health, to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.*

This principle is completely violated in South Africa. Black children start at a disadvantage from conception. Most of their mothers, who are in the lowest social class, are not adequately nourished during pregnancy. This means that the child develops in adverse conditions in utero. The pre natal care is far from adequate. There are not enough hospitals and clinics let alone doctors in the community. In some areas women have to travel for long distances and the transport facilities are very poor so that it may mean travelling for days. Worse still is that most of the clinics have no ambulances and no full time doctors. Many children are born at home in overcrowded, unhygienic conditions without a doctor or midwife in attendance. If there are any complications the child or mother or both die before reaching the nearest hospital.

Those who do reach hospital have no guarantee that they will get a bed. Having a baby which should be a happy event has become a depressing and degrading experience for many women. What upsets people most is that whilst black women are packed like sardines in the black hospitals, there are often a lot of empty beds in the neighbouring white hospitals. Some women have their labour on the floors, or in draughty corridors because the beds are full.

Even for those who manage to get a bed in the labour room there is no privacy, with 30 or more women in the same ward and five or more having babies at the same time. Due to overcrowding women

admitted into some maternity sections of the hospitals are often placed two in a bed, or on mattresses on the floor. It is a grim experience for any woman.

Post natal conditions are equally overcrowded. It is not unusual to see long rows of women lying on trolleys in passages and foyers. Most of the mothers have to leave the hospital within 48 hours irrespective of the home conditions. These children are therefore born in an already grim environment.

### **Death Rate**

Most children born under these conditions experience similar deprivation from the cradle to the grave. The infant mortality rate (IMR) for Africans is not published nationally though it is available for whites, coloureds and Asians.

For Africans the infant mortality rate is available only in certain areas. Whilst the IMR for whites compares very well with those of other developed countries, the IMR for Africans is sky high. The medical officers of health of the following South African towns and cities produced an annual report which included the IMR in 1971 for Africans:

Durban 85 per 1,000

Grahamstown 188 per 1,000

Port Elizabeth 300 per 1,000

Johannesburg 95 per 1,000

During the same year IMR for white South Africans was 21 per 1,000.

This number compared well with the following countries.

Northern Ireland 23

USSR 23

England/Wales 17

These figures only refer to the urban areas of South Africa. In the rural areas and the homelands the figure is much higher. Rural Africans in South Africa have only about a quarter the income of urban Africans and this must inevitably be reflected to some extent in the rural IMR but no national figures are known.

Transkei figures in 1970 were 216 per 1,000. Some people have estimated it at more than 400 per 1,000. Maybe a nationally published IMR for Africans would be too horrifying.



This IMR for Africans is seven times or more than that of whites. But even more significant is that the IMR for Africans in South Africa is higher than that of poorer African countries like Zambia, Ghana etc. If apartheid were truly a policy 'of greater care and benevolence' (to quote the defenders of the system) the African IMR would be at least well below that of Ghana, Zambia, even if not equal to that of whites.

If we take 150 per 1,000 as the national IMR for Africans (which is obviously lower than the actual figure) then what does it mean in actual numerical deaths? In 1971 there were 16 million Africans. The birth rate was about 5% a year. This means that of 750 000 African babies born that year, 110,000 died before their first birthday. This means that 400 babies die every week or 54 babies die every day in South Africa. If 54 African children were shot by white police every day there would be an international outcry — but instead these babies suffer malnutrition and eventually die and they are forgotten. The money spent on one heart transplant could, according to a South African surgeon, save the lives of more than 100 of these babies a year.

Those children who do reach their first birthday still have higher chances of dying before their fifth birthday.

Prof. John Reid, Professor of Physiology at the University of Natal Medical School, warned in 1969 that about 1 million African children in South Africa were suffering from malnutrition and the position was likely to get worse particularly in the rural areas.

He said:

A lot of ill judged statements have been made about the extent to which it is already under control and the likelihood of it being brought completely under control in the future. I do not share this optimism. To me it seems that like the poor, we will have the malnourished always with us.

He added that over the whole country the mortality rate amongst Africans was more than 40% higher than that of whites in the age groups where malnutrition is the greatest threat to life. 'At least 50% of African children die before they are five in the Transkei,' he said. The same was found in Sekhukhuneland.

If Prof. Reid's words were true in the late sixties, the incidence of malnutrition has shot up in the seventies. The lecturers in the

pediatrics department of the University of Natal told the *Sunday Tribune* that this may be due to unemployment. In the late sixties, for instance, 2,000 children suffering from some malnutrition were admitted to King Edward VIII hospital alone but 4,000 were admitted in 1975. Between 1960-75 the total number of admissions went up by one third, whereas malnutrition admissions doubled.

### **Preventable Disease**

A study carried out at King Edward VIII hospital, one of the most extensive surveys of the patterns of disease in African and Indian children, found a disturbingly high rate of preventable diseases.

These included:

*Tuberculosis* The incidence of T.B. in the pediatric unit remained at a steady 7% from 1960-1975. 14% of these T.B. patients died.

*Measles* still has a high mortality rate.

*Congenital syphilis* was also high — this is also an indication of poor ante-natal care.

*Gastro-intestinal* diseases e.g. dysentery, typhoid fever 13%. Malnutrition lowers resistance to disease, and is largely responsible for the unacceptably higher incidence of infection and deaths amongst these children.

Most of these diseases are preventable. Malnutrition is easily preventable.

This survey concluded:

*Tuberculosis* Until a large proportion of the population has been immunized and the nutritional and socio-economic status of our black population has been improved, it is unlikely that the admission rate of T.B. cases will fall.

*Measles* The nationwide immunization programme against measles does not encompass all children of all races and the death rate from measles among black infants remains high.

*Congenital syphilis* is partly the result of the fragmentation of families created by the migrant labour system. The report notes that gastro enteritis, typhoid fever and dysentery could be largely prevented by laying on pure piped water and adequate sewage disposal as alternative to the 'communal all purpose stream'. 'Putting more money and effort into prevention rather than cure would be less costly, easier to accomplish and much more rewarding' it said.

All the above diseases are preventable. Most of them disappear with improvement of housing, water supply and the elimination of poverty.

A survey done in Kwa-Zulu showed that most of the families existed on R18-R22 per month. The average number per family was seven. The poverty datum line based on calculations that include food, fuel, toilet and cleaning materials amounted to R120 per month. During the course of the interviews with mothers it emerged that they were fully aware of what their children should be eating but they were unable to afford those foods as they live in an area where it is difficult to secure a supply of essential food. Malnutrition is not so much the result of ignorance, as some people would like to believe. It is poverty which is the main cause.

The lack of medical staff, especially doctors, makes the situation even more desperate. For whites the ratio of doctor to patient is 1:400 whereas for Africans it is 1:40,000.

Among those children who do not die from malnutrition and infections, many are left with permanent brain damage as a result of malnutrition during the ages of fast brain development.

Some children grow up with serious disabling diseases which are due to a low socio economic status, like rheumatic heart disease. In 1972 in Soweto (the now famous 'model' township for over one million Africans on the edge of Johannesburg) the figure was 6.9 per 1,000 peaking to 19.2 per 1,000.

This is one of the highest recorded levels in the world, probably unparalleled in an industrial area since the 19th century in Europe.

These are just a few examples of how South African black children are affected by apartheid in the field of health.

#### *Principle 6*

*The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall wherever possible grow up in the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security, a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family, and to those without*

*adequate means of support Payment of State and other assistance towards the maintenance of children of large families is desirable*

There is no way that we can pretend that black children in South Africa develop in an harmonious atmosphere. Most children, especially in the rural areas and homelands, grow up in the absence of one or both parents. These parents are migrant workers in the cities of white South Africa. The 'missing father' syndrome is a norm of our society. Fathers at home represent a degree of disorganisation in most cases — it means that he is ill, or lazy or out of work.

The incomplete family is a norm in the homelands. Children growing up in these areas do not know anything about the role of the father. In some cases mothers also have to work in town as domestic servants. This means that children are left with grand parents or even looked after by sisters and brothers who may be marginally older.

These children do not grow up in a proper family setting. There is no model for home life, no day to day example of reciprocal emotional support between parents. Opportunities for shared experiences, shared responsibility, companionship and all the other things generally acknowledged as essential ingredients of a stable family life are missing for eleven and a half months in a year.

This is not by choice. These parents have to go to work in towns and legislation forces them to leave their families behind — the migrant worker system. They live like single men in the hostels and if their wives visit them they are arrested under the trespass laws. This legislation completely wrecks families. These parents can only visit their families in most cases once a year for only two weeks. This not only upsets the emotional needs of the family but it also means that the man has to split his already inadequate salary into two. One part goes to the family, the other one he has to keep for himself.

In the urban areas the situation is only slightly better though far from being satisfactory. In the townships the houses are like match boxes — two bedrooms, one living room and a kitchen. Children of different sexes have to share sleeping accommodation. there is no question of one bedroom per child.

Some mothers in urban areas still work as domestic servants, and have to live on the premises of their bosses for the convenience of the

white family. They only see their families once a week when they are off duty. The children have to look after themselves whilst their mothers look after white children.

Some women work night shifts, cleaning offices of prestige buildings. They leave the townships just before dusk and come back in the early hours of the morning. Whilst other people are sleeping in the comfort of their beds, these women are pushing vacuum cleaners backwards and forwards. They only see their loved ones on Fridays and Saturdays as their working week begins on Sunday. Because of unemployment more and more women are forced to take these jobs.

There is also the problem of women and men who spend years on Robben Island prison and other prisons because of their political beliefs. The security laws have broken up an endless number of families. There are many children who grow up not knowing their fathers or mothers at all because they are political prisoners.

In the urban areas the worst comes when the father dies. The mother and her children lose the right to stay in the house. They have to go to their homeland where in some cases they do not know anyone, and have to start a completely new life with no income. There are no social services in these homelands and rural areas and the plight of these widows who do not receive any State assistance forces them to form new relationships in the hope of receiving a little support. This inevitably leads to a new family being started very often with disastrous consequences for the old family.

#### *Principle 7*

*The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgement and his sense of moral and social responsibility and to become a useful member of society.*

In South Africa there is no compulsory and free education for the Africans, whereas for white children, education is free and compulsory. African children, who are already at a disadvantage in that their parents are the least paid and the least privileged have to pay for their education from start to finish. When their children turn seven, which is the age at which black children are legally accepted in schools, there are a few questions that parents have to answer to themselves before sending them to school.



The first question is can they afford (financially) to send the child to school? If the answer is yes then the next question is: is there a school nearby? In most countries it is automatic that at a certain age all children go to school, but for South African Africans it's a different story

Because so many parents cannot afford to send their children to school, according to the 1970 census it was estimated that 48% of all African children were illiterate in terms of the U.N. criterion for 'functional literacy', a minimum of four years schooling. For those who do go to school the conditions are not of the best either

For the first two years almost 80% of schools use what is termed the 'hot seat system'. What is the 'hot seat system'? This is a double session system. There are two sessions of three hours each instead of one session of four and a half hours. Teachers, classrooms and equipment have to serve two sets of children every day. This system is justified by the authorities on the grounds that it enables more children to gain some schooling despite the limited number of schools and teachers

But the losses are considerable. In a four year lower primary course the children lose 600 hours of education. Teachers become bored and tired with the immediate repetition of lessons, so children in the second session make less progress than those in the first session. A three hour session is too short. Teachers find it impossible to know children individually. Though this system was meant to be temporary it has become permanent.

This system causes a bottleneck because there is no corresponding expansion of the higher primary and secondary school facilities. The drop out from school is very high.

#### Drop Out Rate in African Schools.

1962 — 426,829	1969 — 119,704
1963 — 324,024	1970 — 49,509
1964 — 288,911	1971 — 42,509
1965 — 288,480	1972 — 32,074
1966 — 188,333	1973 — 11,344
1967 — 144,252	1974 — 6,732
1968 — 121,171	

So of 426,839 children who started school in 1962 only 6,732 were still at school in 1974. This wastage makes no sense from the point of

view of an educational system aimed at those social and cultural goals which elsewhere are taken for granted. In South Africa, education for Africans is subordinate to the overriding demands of apartheid and racial domination even if the result is wasteful, not just from the point of view of the children who are deprived, but also from the government's point of view.

The conditions in these schools leave much to be desired. It is common in the South African African primary school to see children sitting on the floor during classes because there are no chairs or desks to sit on. Worse still some children have no classrooms at all. They are taught under the trees if the weather permits.

To reach schools some children have to walk for more than five miles to and from every day. They go without lunch because food is no longer provided in most schools. These children walk bare-footed all the year round because the parents cannot afford shoes.

### **Inferior Education**

It is not only the school buildings which are appalling but the education itself is inferior. Bantu education is specially designed for Africans. It is a discriminatory education. In 1948 the Nationalists set up the De Villiers Commission on technical and vocational training. While allowing in theory that education should be the same for all races, the commission said consideration should be given to background, environmental and occupational opportunities viz. Africans should receive education tailored to the limited job opportunities available to them.

This idea has become part of the rationale of discriminatory education for Africans in South Africa. It is part of a vicious circle of denial that African children cannot escape. The other part of the circle justifies the exclusion of Africans from skilled jobs and even from civil rights on the grounds of educational backwardness. Such ideas have shaped the fate of African children for many years.

Another commission recommended that the official languages (English and Afrikaans) should be taught in such a way that an African child would be able to find his way in white communities, to follow oral and written instructions, and carry out a simple conversation with whites about his work and other subjects of common interest.

Article 15 of the manifesto of the Institute for Christian National Education published in Afrikaans in February 1948:

'Native Education should be based on the principles of trusteeship, non-equality and segregation: its aim should be to inculcate the white man's view of life especially that of the Boer nation, which is the senior trustee.'

This is the type of education that an African child pays for: an education which prepares him to serve his white master and accept an inferior position without question. This education makes him part of the reservoir of cheap labour. Because of the nature of the education system many children do not go to school at all and most of those who do drop out before they are sixteen.

I would like to look at what happens to children who are not at school. Some end up as young beggars. They stand on the roadside hungry, begging for food and clothes from motorists or passengers in buses. Along the railway line it is not an unusual sight to see rows of children in rags, begging for left overs from passengers. When the train approaches they shout 'Jiba' which means throw and they will fight to catch whatever is being thrown at them.

According to the South African National Council of Child Welfare there are tens of thousands of innocent children who are victims of neglect, poverty and brutality. Hundreds of children of school going age are found collecting bones, copper wire and bottles in the hope of getting a few cents for bread. Children are also found scratching around garbage bins to recover bits of food.

To see children hungrily eating rotten fruit is a common sight. Many young girls, because of neglect and poverty, become prostitutes and the prey of rapists.

Others take up employment — this takes us to

#### *Principle 9*

*The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty, and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic in any form.*

*The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate age, he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which could prejudice his health or education or interfere with his physical, mental and moral development.*

Because of poverty, hunger and lack of education opportunities some children take up employment at a very early age as labourers on farms or in the sugar cane fields. Child labour is theoretically illegal but it is common practice.

In 1975 the Department of Bantu Affairs in Pietermaritzburg investigated allegations that African children were offered 'joy rides', only to be taken to work for low wages in the cane fields. This came to light after thirteen children had been removed from a farm with suspected typhoid.

In July 1978 a newspaper report said that a Natal farmer who had kidnapped a 16 year old Soweto boy and kept him captive for five years had told the court that he had police permission. In general the children employed on farms work for starvation wages in appalling conditions. A few incidents of child labour are cited below, illustrating gross exploitation of children who can least defend themselves.

In May 1977 *Weekend World* did an exposé on the use of child labour in the Eastern Transvaal. These children were paid 50c a day although they had been promised R3.00 and they were dressed in rags and exposed to hunger and assault.

In December 1977 the *Rand Daily Mail* did an investigation on child labour used on Natal's massive sugar cane plantations. Most of the employees were girls between 13 and 15 years old. They worked a nine hour day six days a week with no food provided during the day. They lived in compounds near the estate. Most did not attend school. They were permanently employed on the plantation.

The investigators spoke to several boys and girls on the estate. One, a 13 year-old boy, said he earned 90c a day. A 13 year old girl said she earned 50c a day. These are just a few examples of child labour in South Africa.

Some children who cannot get a job, who cannot even get a permit to look for jobs in towns, end up as 'tsotsis'. This is a South African term for criminals. Lack of opportunities for education, broken family life, poverty and starvation all make up a good recipe for producing criminals. Mind you, there is no social security in South Africa. If you are unemployed you are doomed to starvation. These children pickpocket, they become burglars,

robbers and generally thrive on crime. Many become violent, which is only to be expected from children who have grown up in a hostile environment.

Crime in South Africa is almost the highest in Africa, 7,000 Africans die in violent crime every day.

Some children end up as addicts. Because they are hungry and bored, they drug themselves, using all sorts of things. Benzine or glue sniffing is popular, probably the cheapest way. Because they have no money they use empty glue containers which they dig out of the rubbish bins.

The *Sunday Times* of April 1973 was told by Dr. A. D. Bensusan, Mayor of Johannesburg, that he was aware that glue sniffing amongst black children was a serious problem.

'One cannot overstate the dangers of this abuse. Prolonged sniffing of some of the substances used in adhesives can cause irreversible brain, liver and kidney damage', he said. One of the nuns at the Holy Family Convent in Johannesburg said that she had to bargain with some of the children. Because they were obviously hungry she gave them food in exchange for glue bottles.

A number of children end up in mental hospitals. The hostile environment in South Africa has caused a huge jump in the number of cases of mental disorders. According to Mrs. Vivian Budlender (*Rand Daily Mail* 16.12.77) the political situation threatens the mind. Racial tension, political instability and economic recession had caused a substantial increase in the number of mentally ill people. She said this problem affected all races. 'The increase of mental illness amongst young blacks', she said, 'was being caused by frustration with the political situation in the country and unemployment'.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) in one report concluded that mental illness, which can take the form of suicide tendencies, severe depression and alcoholism, has a social cause. In South Africa it stems from the majority of the population being exposed to an anomalous, hostile and highly stressful environment. The report concludes that as well as causing mental illness, apartheid ensures that it is inadequately treated.



## Brutality to Children

There are reports of increasing brutality to children both by police and public, especially white farmers. In addition to the individual acts of cruelty, child offenders are often sentenced to floggings. According to statistics of the Department of Justice, floggings were administered to 45,233 people including juveniles between July 1, 1972, and June 30, 1973, compared with 39,654 for the period July 1, 1968, to June 30, 1969.

Judges, psychiatrists, lawyers and criminologists according to the *Sunday Times* labelled caning as gruesome, brutal, primitive and callous.

Flogging is not an enlightened way of punishing or rehabilitating people. Studies in America and Britain have shown that it is not effective and does not act as a deterrent. Mr Mike Mitchell, opposition spokesman on Justice, said many people did not realise what a flogging entailed. 'The tremendous affront to a person's dignity is humiliating in the extreme'.

A prison psychologist said he felt that although caning was humiliating and often ineffective 'it is often suitable for psychopaths because they only respect somebody more powerful than themselves'.

But according to a psychiatrist who has helped rehabilitate many psychopaths the psychopath's reaction to this 'justice' is bitterness and vindictiveness. Besides being a repulsive, brutalising and humiliating form of punishment for children, 'accidents' and irregularities can occur.

In 1965 a 16 year-old Orlando youth died a few hours after being whipped with a light cane. No doctor examined him before the lashing and no doctor was present during the punishment, though according to the law a person sentenced to strokes must be examined by a medical officer — usually a district surgeon who has to declare him fit to receive punishment.

Six cuts were imposed by a Beaufort West Magistrate on a 10 year-old Coloured boy for the theft of ten empty cold drink bottles worth 25c.

Many alternative methods of punishment have been suggested. Mr Justice Steyn said 'Corporal punishment is too often used as a wonder remedy for the correction of criminal tendencies in magistrate's courts. Caning, especially on children, not only has bad

physical effects but also has psychological effects. A Johannesburg psychiatrist said

It differs from person to person, but often leaves severe mental scars. Some people never recover from the experience. We are ruining people, not rehabilitating them. These children are therefore far from being helped by caning.

### *Principle 3*

*The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and nationality*

This principle to most people is obvious and is common sense, but in South Africa children are deprived of nationality because of the Bantustan policy. They are denied the right of being South Africans and are forced to accept tribal classification which the government propagates.

As for names, millions of Africans are not called by their proper names. They are referred to as 'boy' or 'girl' even when adults. Alternatively they are given names by their employers. I once went to a shop in town and the salesman addressed me in the following manner, 'Can I help you Jane' (Jane is not my name). I then told him what I wanted and when he gave it to me I said 'thank you James'. He was furious because his name was not James. I then said to him, trying to make him see reason, 'As long as I am Jane you shall remain James', and I left.

This habit of calling Africans anything is not only applied to domestic servants but to any African the whites come in contact with.

### *Principle 2*

*The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner, and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interest of the child shall be the paramount consideration.*

There is no way in which legislation in South Africa takes account of this principle. Children grow up under oppression and in most humiliating and degrading conditions. Legislation in South Africa does not protect children.

Because of legislation which directly affects them the Soweto youth took to the streets in June 1976 to protest. Instead of children being protected they were shot, killed in the most brutal way and thousands were maimed at the very beginning of their lives.

What has happened to the survivors of Soweto? Despite international protest the situation for children has become worse. Large numbers of school children are being held in detention for long periods in South Africa, frequently in solitary confinement without access to parents and family, subject to police brutality. This inhuman conduct of the South African authorities is made possible by, and is an inevitable consequence of the broad detention provisions in South African security laws.

Since 1976 the Terrorism Act of 1967 has been the most widely used of all security laws for detention purposes. Section 6 of the Act authorises detention without charge for an indefinite period of any person suspected of terrorism, which is defined in extremely broad terms or of any person thought by security police to be withholding information relating to terrorist offences under the Act. Moreover detention under Section 6 is required to be incommunicado. No parents, relatives, friends or even lawyers can talk to you.

There is abundant medical evidence that prolonged solitary confinement is for many people a severe form of psychological torture and can cause lasting damage to the personality. With children it can only be described as a shocking and unforgivable crime. The refusal of the security police to provide information concerning detentions makes it extremely difficult to obtain a full account. The South African Institute of Race Relations report, which does not claim to cover all cases, shows the following

Date	Total persons in		
	Detention on pertinent date	No. of School Age children	No. of University Students
March 25, 1977	471	84	49
Sept. 30, 1977	662	141	30
Nov. 30, 1977	714	180	37

The Minister of Justice J. I. Kruger stated that six Robben Island prisoners were aged under 16 years when convicted and are now serving five year sentences.

Because of all these laws and the political situation thousands of children have chosen to leave South Africa and their parents. Many of them are in the frontline countries, wanting nothing else but military training so that they can go back and fight for their freedom and abolish exploitation.

*Principle 10*

*The child shall be protected from practices which foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.*

In South Africa the apartheid system is based on the direct opposite of this principle, the violation of which affects both black and white children and the population at large.

South African children are brought up in an environment which encourages racial hostility and discrimination. They live in a country where segregation and racism is institutionalised. Black and white children do not see each other as fellow countrymen but as master and slave, or oppressor and oppressed. South Africa is a country where white children are indoctrinated from childhood and are made to believe that blacks are sub-human, dirty, stupid and unreliable.

It is actually amazing that the A.N.C. with all the racism in South Africa still fights for a non-racial South Africa which belongs to all who live in it, black and white alike.

## **A Grim Picture**

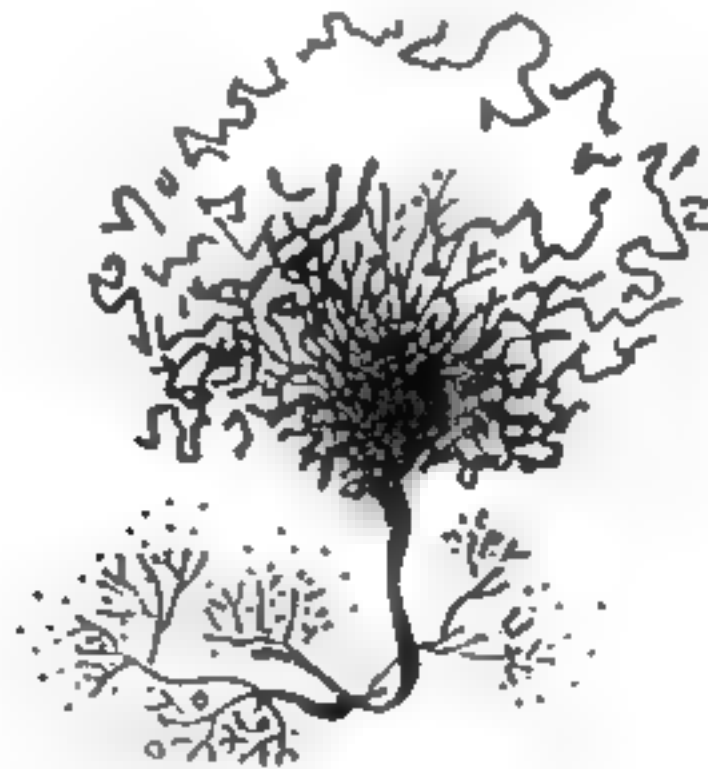
From this short account it is very clear that the situation of black children is grim. The apartheid system and the socio-economic position of black people makes them victims of ill health, illiteracy, exploitation and death at a very young age.

It makes children victims of infections, preventable diseases, malnutrition. Their families are broken up either by the migrant labour system or by political repression. It forces them to be exploited in the form of child labour. It drives them to being criminals because of their frustration and because they cannot

develop their talents for the betterment of their society. The situation has forced some of them to leave the country.

During this International Year of the Child people should concern themselves with the plight of these children. The immediate and long term solution is to support the struggle for the total liberation of black people in South Africa. The ANC and its allies who constitute the liberation movement are fighting for a free South Africa on the basis of the Freedom Charter. We do not fight for revenge. We do not want the master of today to be the slave of tomorrow. We fight for total liberation, to dismantle the apartheid regime, to abolish all forms of exploitation.

Because of the society which has been created in South Africa the task of the liberation movement becomes even greater. It means not only fighting for political freedom and economic independence but also for the creation of a society where children will be offered the best. This can only be achieved if all the factors which lead to crime and broken homes are abolished. We want a society which will not be described in terms of colour, a society where everybody will be described as a South African.





# HOW THE CUBAN REVOLUTION WAS MADE

by Fidel Castro

*January 1st, 1979, marked the 20th anniversary of the historic Cuban Revolution. In this interview with O. Darusenkov, a special correspondent of the Soviet journal Kommunist, the Cuban leader explains how he became a Communist and how the Cuban masses were mobilised in the struggle to overthrow the hated Batista regime and lay the foundations for socialism.*

**Question:** How did you come to take a communist outlook?

**Answer:** When I entered the university, I did not yet have any definite political views, but only an inclination for political activity. Rather, I just followed certain ethical standards. Theft, abuse, etc were repugnant to me. Besides, I possessed a rebellious character.

At that time the university was controlled by groups linked with the government of Grau San Martin, which had been wallowing in

corruption, resorting to the gangster methods of repression and so on. Not having any coherent political views, but with a very rebellious mind, I, like Don Quixote, plunged into battle against all this.

In the university, I made the acquaintance of some young communists. They were Lionel Soto, Alfredo Guevara, Garcia, Nunes Jimenes and others — indeed a whole group. A friendship sprang between us.

On the first and second courses, we were taught the political economy of capitalism. Studying it, I came to think of economic problems and, as a result, found the capitalist system to be absurd. Earlier thoughts like this simply had not entered my head. For I was of well-to-do family background and had attended a church school. So it was my spontaneous reaction to the study of capitalist political economy, the major test in which I passed with excellent marks, even though classes in this difficult subject, which required the reading of thousands of pages, had been given by a professor who used to fail virtually every student during examinations. The crisis of overproduction, food surpluses while there were starving people, the anarchy of production, machines acting in the capacity of an enemy of workers and depriving them of jobs and other such elementary things got me to take a critical view of the capitalist system. I came to think of how all these problems could be resolved and spontaneously, without knowing it myself, arrived at socialist conclusions which bore a utopian character. I became a utopian communist, having not even read a single Marxist document.

In studying political economy, I discovered that there existed different doctrines — capitalist and socialist. I began to compare them. Those were the early steps. When I first came across the Manifesto of the Communist Party, I turned out to be fully prepared for accepting it. It produced a tremendous impression upon me. After reading this work, I received a theoretical explanation of all the questions which had agitated me and whose solution I had been seeking by my own efforts. So what? I began rapidly to turn into a communist in my convictions. This was also facilitated by my friendly association with communists at the university.

Those were the grim days of McCarthyism when communists were being cruelly persecuted. The establishment sought in every

way to isolate them and to deprive them of work. At Havana University among the 15,000 students I cannot recall that there were any more than 15 communists. Maybe there were even 30 of them, including those who were known and those of whom we didn't know that they were communists. I was on very good terms with them. We together participated in demonstrations and in other undertakings.

But what happened? After I entered the university, under the influence of some student leaders I came into touch with representatives of the forces opposed to the government of Grau. Those forces were the party of Chibas, Luis Orlando and other men who had withdrawn from the ranks of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and taken a stand against the government. I joined those people even before I arrived at a communist outlook. Thus started my work in the party of the orthodox, or the Party of the Cuban People — a progressive liberal reformist party which opposed the government of Grau and enjoyed broad popular support. So I went over to Marxist positions when I was already a member of the party.

By the moment of my graduation, the following picture had emerged. The communists represented just a small isolated group. Anti-communism prevailed in the country. At the same time, there existed an active mass party whose participants were peasants, workers and petty bourgeois.

I came to think of how one could lead the mass of ordinary members of this party up to revolutionary positions. I myself already had communist convictions then and maintained excellent relations with all the communist leaders at the university. They helped me to acquire party literature. I purchased it on credit since I had little money available. I had all the works of Lenin and Marx which had been published in Cuba. We coordinated all our university actions. In a word, I had the most intimate relationship with representatives of the Popular Socialist Party. At the same time, within my own party many leaders looked at me askew with distrust, because more or less they knew about my views.

I worked out my first revolutionary strategy in the hope to rally the masses of the party to which I belonged. It was an unworkable proposition under Chibas. But after his suicide in 1951 the masses were left without a leader. Thus, at the moment when a dilemma could arise before me — either to join the PSP or apply myself to the

realisation of my own ideas — it was exactly then that there appeared, from my point of view, the opportunity of taking these masses along the right path. So I began to evolve my own strategic line of struggle for socialism. That was still before the 10th of March, 1952, when Batista made his coup d'etat.

I had plans to use the elections that were to be held in 1952. By all indications, the orthodox seemed to be the sure winners. So I assumed that I would be able to put forward a programme in parliament, similar in content to that which later became the programme of Moncada. In my firm belief, a broad mass movement could be organized in support of this programme. The programme would certainly not have been approved by parliament. For in the Hinterland of the country leaders of the party of the orthodox were in the majority landowners or bourgeois. They kept control of the party in their hands. True, the situation in Havana was somewhat different. There were more people here who held sounder views. Those people could not be an obstacle to me.

### **An Active Campaign**

After university I began to conduct an active political campaign, and obtained a good means for it in the opposition newspaper *Alerta*, which had the largest circulation in the country. Each Monday, when its special issue came out, my articles appeared on the front page under big headlines. In short, even several months before the 10th of March coup my strategic line in regard to the party of the orthodox, parliament and a revolutionary programme was successfully being carried out. The coup compelled everything to be changed.

Thus, when I graduated from the university and received the rank of a lawyer, I had close relations with representatives of the youth organisation of the communists and with some of the leaders of the party. The relations were so good that, participating in the elections which took place, if my memory does not fail me, in 1950, I voted for the candidate of the party of the orthodox for the post of the mayor of Havana and for Lionel Soto, a candidate of the communists for the post of a deputy. Thus, having taken my first and only part in elections before the revolution, I voted for the candidate

of the communists for parliament. This attests to the excellent relations I had with the communists already at that time.

I was a passionate communist, but formally not a member of the party. And I was not its member because I developed my own strategic line for a revolution in Cuba.

Why did I take this decision? Because anti communism was dominant in the country, because the people were confused and because the communist party was isolated. In other words, at that time the communist party had no objective possibility to spearhead the revolution in Cuba. I assumed that if I managed to lead the broad masses, then, without speaking of communism, it would be possible to win power. But I believed that a revolutionary programme was necessary. Its ultimate aim was to be socialism. To me, all this was absolutely clear. And it was this strategy that I worked out even before Moncada.

By the time of the coup of March 10 I had established close contacts with the communist party, but the coup produced a new situation. At first I began to prepare people for participation in the proposed united struggle of all anti Batista forces. I turned to a military strategy. The situation had become new, I told myself. Batista could be overthrown only by the combined efforts of the whole opposition. Among the ranks of the opposition there was talk of armed struggle, and I plunged myself into organizing the movement. Not a separate movement, but a movement within the masses of the orthodox, where I started setting up militant groups and revolutionary cells. They got ready for participation in the common struggle of the opposition against Batista. Our movement thus came into being. It did not appear because of an ambition to have one's own movement, it appeared in order to fulfil the role of a militant force in the struggle for the overthrow of tyranny. This is how it originated. But a year went by and it became clear that the hopes for real struggle had not been justified, that all this was a spurious thing, that the opposition parties had proved incapable they had no qualities necessary for organizing an effective armed struggle — and that they had deceived everybody. Some of them did not wish to fight, others simply could not. That was how matters stood. Then I arrived at the conclusion that we should launch an armed struggle completely on our own.



We worked out the plan of Moncada whose aim, as I have already repeatedly said, was to capture army barracks, raise the province and call for a general strike, using the people's hatred towards the dictatorship, that is, to do what we ultimately did accomplish on January 1, 1959, five years five months and five days later. The capture of the barracks could provide a spark to all this. If we failed to hold the city, we would withdraw to Sierra Maestra.

Thus, from the time when the attack on Moncada was being prepared we already had a clear idea of what was later translated into practice. And all this time I maintained contact with the communists. In that situation they had their own point of view and their own slogans. To tell the truth, we could not demand of them that they have faith in what we were going to do. For a party educated in a classical spirit, with its own schemes and with its own conceptions, that was difficult. Moreover, the communist party itself could not set the objective of its capturing power. Even though power in Cuba could be taken by revolutionary means, the communists could not do that, considering that the United States of America held complete sway at that time in our country.

And we had our own ideas and practice showed that they were correct. The masses of the party of the orthodox became the mainspring of the movement, which later assumed still greater proportions.

It turned out to be possible to take power with the help of masses, arms and a revolutionary programme, which ultimately opened the way to socialism.

**Question:** After the victory of the Cuban revolution bourgeois parties disappeared from the political scene. But there was no decree or any other document banning those parties?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** How did they then disappear? A whole group of bourgeois opposition parties figures in the Caracas pact, but already a couple of months after the victory of the revolution they disappeared. I do not speak of the parties which had supported Batista. This question is clear.

**Answer:** This was an interesting phenomenon. The leaders of all those parties which had acted against Batista, in the early days after

the victory of the revolution were on very good terms with us. Prio, Aureliano and all the others became our great 'friends'.

**Question:** All of them returned to Cuba immediately after the victory of the revolution?

**Answer:** Yes. Joyous and happy. Expressing in every way their fine attitude to me. I behaved very cautiously in regard to them, while displaying the necessary attention. In order to understand how attentive we were to them. I shall cite one example. A law against embezzlers of state property was adopted, but with a retroactive effect only from March 10, 1952. Not before March 10 because otherwise we would have had to confiscate the property of Prio and other leaders for, when in power, they had plundered public property. But since all of them were in some way involved in opposition to the dictatorship of Batista, in passing this law the year 1952 was chosen as the starting date of its operation. Otherwise we would have had to confiscate the property of Grau and Prio and all the other leaders of the traditional parties who had once held power. We treated them very gently and with much caution, proceeding from our desire for unity.

The bourgeois leaders themselves began to drift away from us when a radicalization of the revolutionary process got under way. After the victory of the revolution we restored the constitution. And according to the constitution, elections were to be held. I remember how three or four months after the victory of the revolution (I find it difficult to give the precise date now), addressing a mass rally, I broached the subject of elections. And participants in the meeting began to chant, 'Why elections?' 'Why elections?' 'Why elections?' That is, the people themselves, who had by then become radicalized told us that they did not need a formal restoration of the political mechanisms that had existed prior to the victory of the revolution. The masses themselves indicated that elections were not necessary.

When I recount it, some people, for example, bourgeois journalists, think that all this is a fiction or an excuse. But it was actually the masses that reached the conclusion that all the traditional mechanisms of government, the mechanisms of state authority had lived their day. And, naturally, we were in agreement with this general mood. 'Why elections?' And then the bourgeois political parties, seeing the radicalization of the revolutionary

process and the impossibility of a return to the mechanisms that decided the question of power which had existed before the revolution, began to lose all hope. Most of them became engaged in conspiratorial activity and started leaving their country. This was how the bourgeois parties ceased their existence. There was no special decision or special decree on the dissolution of parties.

**Question:** How was the Integrated Revolutionary Organisation formed?

**Answer:** Immediately after the victory of the revolution there was much confusion about the state of affairs. But there existed very close relations and the coordination of actions with the leadership of the Popular Socialist Party. At some point Comrade Blas Roca, who was the party's general secretary, even suggested that I assume its leadership. Our meetings, first sporadic, gradually became systematic. Thus there emerged our leadership consisting of members of the 26th of July Movement and the Popular Socialist Party. In the early stage, the 13th of March Revolutionary Directorate did not participate in it. The leadership shaped up *de facto*. It included the main leaders of the revolution, Raul Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara and other comrades, and the main leaders of the PSP. We had no haggle over numbers. Simply the most trusted of our comrades and the most trusted comrades from the PSP started holding meetings. We met regularly at Cojimar, near Havana.

This union occurred *de facto*. It resulted from the contacts we had had even before the revolutionary war, subsequent contacts and the acquired habit of consulting each other on the most important questions. As a result, on the basis of a joint decision there was formed a leadership which got the name of the Revolutionary Leadership or the leadership of the Integrated Revolutionary Organisation. But it had worked unitedly even before its formal proclamation. And all this happened in a situation where a people's militia was being formed and a struggle waged to free the trade union movement from reactionary elements. The struggle also proceeded within our own Movement, in which left and right wings existed.

**Question:** The Popular Socialist Party took a decision on self-dissolution with the aim of creating the Integrated Revolutionary Organisation?

**Answer:** Yes, it decided to dissolve itself.

**Question:** And how did the 26th of July Movement act? Was there any special decision taken?

**Answer:** No. The armed struggle against the dictatorship had made our Movement similar to an army. It, of course, had its own leadership. But after the victory of the revolution differences began to surface in its ranks between those who accepted what was being done in the country and those who did not, those who had great prejudices and suspicions in regard to the communists and wanted to sharpen relations with them. This rendered the leadership of the Movement ineffective. Besides, the Movement hadn't an established organisational form. It did not hold congresses. The Movement was not a party in the direct sense of the word, with its own constitution and other formal attributes.

Now let us look at this matter from a different angle. The Movement enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the people. At that time, one can say, 90 per cent of the people claimed they belonged to the Movement because they supported the revolution. The framework of the Movement proved to be too narrow to embrace the immense popular stream that gushed forth after the victory of the revolution. Organisationally it was unprepared for this, nor had it for this the necessary cadres.

I personally always regarded the revolution and its mass base as something much broader than the Movement. The Movement appeared to me to be the channel of a rivulet too small to hold or direct the popular stream of Amazon dimensions, which was born of the revolution. Besides the Movement had fulfilled its task and we already spoke not so much for the Movement, as in the name of the revolution as a whole.

And really, whom did we represent after the victory of the revolution? Was it just the 26th of July Movement?

Even our army, which was the army of the 26th of July Movement, right after victory we began to call the Revolutionary Army or the Army of the Revolution. We had ceased to talk of the army of the 26th of July Movement. We believed that it had fulfilled its mission. By then we were already acting not only as the representatives of one movement or one organisation. We indeed acted in the capacity of representatives of the whole people. And

therefore we stood for unity. The decision on unification we adopted as a political leadership of the Revolutionary Government, and not as the leadership of the Movement, in conjunction with the leadership of the Popular Socialist Party.

**Question:** What about the Revolutionary Directorate?

**Answer:** After the desertion by the other political parties, the only revolutionary forces left were the 26th of July Movement, the Popular Socialist Party and the Revolutionary Directorate. At the moment of the formal announcement of the union of all these forces the Directorate took part in it. In other words, negotiations had been held with it and there was a formal meeting at which the Integrated Revolutionary Organisation was established. True, it should be recalled that even before that, long before that there had existed a leadership that was formed de facto from representatives of the 26th of July Movement and the Popular Socialist Party. It had not been given an organisational form. That was a leadership which had taken shape de facto in the process of revolutionary development.

Thus, when on April 16, 1961, after the piratic bombardment of Cuba by forces of American mercenaries we proclaimed our revolution socialist and when the next day intervention at the Bay of Pigs took place this leadership was already in existence. And the Cubans went to battle against the mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs, defending socialism. This refutes the assertions of those who say that the Cuban revolution was betrayed and so on, because the entire people rose to fight for socialism. In Sierra Maestra the struggle for socialism had not yet occurred. Only prerequisites for this were being created then.

**Question:** Cuba, where anti communism had prevailed before the revolution, virtually in just two years turned into a country the public opinion of which began to support socialism. How did such a radical change come about?

**Answer:** I shall give my explanation of this. A strong anti-communism did really exist in our country. That was the result of an extensive anti communist campaign by radio, television, press, cinematography and all other means, which had gone on for decades. In this situation the very word 'communism' as such frightened many people, even though they did not know for sure what communism was. That campaign was conducted among the

uneducated people who were often simply ignorant. So, in the early stage of the revolution one could ask a group of working people whether they agreed with nationalization or agrarian reform and they answered in the affirmative. One could ask them about everything that constitutes socialism and they nodded their agreement. But as soon as one asked them whether they accepted socialism, the immediate answer was 'No'. They were against socialism. There was, however, one subtle detail. people were more scared by the word 'communism' than 'socialism'. Even today in many parts of the world there are people who call themselves socialists, while not being such. The word 'communism' frightened even more than 'Marxism Leninism', in which people saw a definite scientific term.

A developed class consciousness was absent among the people. But there existed, if I may say so, a class spirit among the workers and peasants. There was a strong dissatisfaction with the system, but this dissatisfaction was not buttressed theoretically. People were against the government and against all previous governments. Why? Because of unemployment, illiteracy, the lack of medical aid, poverty and other burdens that citizens of any capitalist country, and all the more so of an underdeveloped one, bore on their shoulders. But they did not know the social and historical reasons, that is, in other words, scientific reasons of all this. They could not find a scientific explanation of it. But the people were against the regime then in existence. I sometimes say that they had a class subconsciousness or class instinct. One can speak of the class instinct of a peasant who pays rent and is exploited by a latifundista; of a people being exploited by traders and importers, of workers being exploited by their bosses and experiencing want. They were not aware of the root causes of their plight because few had the opportunity to study Marxism, which explains all these problems. In other words, people revolted against the system. But they did not know that the system was called capitalism. They believed that the system meant Batista, or Grau San Martin, or Prio. Many people thought that the cause of all their troubles lay in corrupted governments which had plundered the treasury. They did not understand that the cause was backwardness, capitalism, imperialism, in short, a definite economic system.



The revolution put an end to the military dictatorship of Batista and handed over real power to the people. The workers and peasants who had taken arms in their hands everywhere became the representatives of power. Thus, the people had obtained a genuine freedom. But it was not only freedom that was gained. Inequality began to disappear, and so did the racial, sex and other discrimination that had existed here before. People felt that immediately. It was supplemented with social measures.

For, before that our people saw only governments which looked solely after the interests of the powers that be. No one displayed any concern for the people. And now came a government which began to act against the interests of the powers that be and to deal heavy blows at these interests. It was the first government to show a real commitment to justice. For the first time in the history of Cuba criminals began to be executed, that is, those who had murdered and tortured people. And virtually the entire people gave their assent to this. For such justice had not been seen in Cuba throughout its history, including the wars for independence. The Blacks received access to where they had not been admitted earlier: to clubs, cultural centres, beaches and so on. All the disgraceful and humiliating bans that had been established by the bourgeoisie and Yankees were abolished. Social laws began to be adopted. The agrarian reform struck at the big landowners and freed the peasants from rent and precarism\*, creating simultaneously new conditions for agricultural workers. A lower rent was introduced, the Telephone Company was placed under state control, and electricity charges were slashed. The people immediately received material benefits. All the workers who had lost work for political reasons were reinstated. A start was made in bringing an end to unemployment and attention began to be paid to public education and health services for the people. Gambling, prostitution, drug addiction and beggary were eliminated. There began the nation's conflict with imperialism. Factories, plants, banks and foreign trade were nationalized.

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\* Precarism was the practice of land use in pre-revolutionary Cuba, under which landless peasants settled on vacant lands and tilled the occupied plots without juridical documents entitling them to their possession.

## **Development of Consciousness**

The people really gained material benefits. But there was more to it. One should not forget the spiritual factors: the dignity of a liberated man, the people who had taken power into their hands, the soldiers, workers and peasants who had become milicianos, who had become state authority. The people who now could go to enjoy sunshine at the seaside. The Blacks who everywhere now had equal access. The people who now felt themselves the masters of the country and were really such.

Each of the measures adopted by the revolution developed the consciousness. All the problems facing the country were now explained to the people and the people began to be relied upon. They were told about the difficulties, about the availability of resources, about everything that helped them to understand that earlier they had lived in the conditions of an exploitative regime, helped them to begin to understand what socialism was. The people associated all the changes with socialism. They started saying: if that is socialism, then we welcome it. At first socialism is accepted – and then begins the acceptance of Marxism-Leninism. In other words, the facts here preceded theoretical explanations. Later the time came for theoretical explanations as well. From each fact and each event a lesson was drawn and a conclusion was made. And then it all resulted in a theoretical analysis of the problem. Thus theory confirmed the created opinion and explained what had happened. It built up the mood fostered in the people: if that is socialism, then we are for it. I believe that it is the facts, the revolutionary laws and the conditions created by the revolution that led to the people's going socialist. Indeed the people accepted socialism because they identified with it everything that had been accomplished by the revolution.

Of course, a fierce struggle had to be waged against anti-communism. Many speeches had to be made on this account. Television, radio and all other propaganda means were used to this end. For the enemy immediately attempted to split our ranks, attempted to exploit the still existing prejudices. But the policy of unity was pursued most consistently.

By the way, I want to say a few words about one more point. The fact is that anti-communism existed only superficially. It was based

on the ignorance of people. Whereas socialist and communist views rest on knowledge, on political literacy. Socialism in itself has an immense power of attraction. Take, for instance, the comrades whom I recruited for participation in the assault on Moncada. They were neither Marxists nor communists. The comrades were ordinary working people. But as soon as they were furnished with appropriate material, an appropriate Marxist interpretation of problems, they showed an awakening immediate interest. An awareness developed in them that earlier they had been in a state of political ignorance and that Marxism was the ray of sun that elucidates all the problems. What previously they could not understand now, from the perspective of class struggles, in terms of the concept of the exploitation of man by man, they began to grasp very rapidly. For the Marxist Leninist teaching is exceptionally rich in content. We undoubtedly are much stronger than our capitalist opponents in what concerns doctrines. Socialism and Marxism-Leninism are very attractive not only from the point of view of the strength of their theory, but also of their moral force. One should hear what our people say when one talks with them about capitalism. In a word, anti-communism was a kind of varnish superimposed on the ignorance of people, while socialism has deep roots, it is ingrained in the consciousness and culture of people.

I think that apparently in the Soviet Union also, when the struggle for socialism started in your country, only an insignificant minority conceived in fact of what socialism was theoretically. There, too, a similar process occurred when land was distributed to the peasants, peace was won and workers became the owners of the means of production.

To cite another example the same is bound to happen in Ethiopia. And also in Angola. Do many people have a Marxist-Leninist consciousness there? Very few. But what, for example, does the MPLA mean? It means independence, freedom and social justice.

I think that probably in all the revolutionary processes actual changes precede the political culture and political consciousness of masses. And herein lies the essence of the enormous importance of revolutionary programmes. The programmes of revolutionary parties should express the feelings, desires and aspirations of masses.

A good programme is the one which puts forward demands that meet the aspirations of masses and is realizable in a given situation

Of course, here in Cuba we had a specific situation. during the war we could not conduct propaganda for socialism and Marxism-Leninism because of the international situation — this would have led to a strangling of the revolution by the Americans. And the people also were not yet prepared for this, they would not have understood us.

Let us take such a document as 'History Will Absolve Me' It sets out the programme of Moncada. There is a clause on workers' sharing in the profits of factories in it I remember all the disputes we had on this question I wanted very much to include in the programme a demand for the nationalization of factories, but I told myself that this should not be done Although I knew that the conception of profit sharing was a revisionist one and did not subscribe to it, I nevertheless included it in the programme Since it was impossible to raise the question of nationalisation of factories, so I raised the question of workers' sharing in factory profits Of course, the Moncada programme was a practical document, it did not pursue the aim of theoretical elucidation of the question Its task was to open the eyes of the masses And it did really open the eyes of the masses. Interestingly enough, no one accused the Moncada programme of communism or socialism. But it was this document that brought us to the road of socialism. I have already said that a revolutionary movement should put forward a programme which would be realizable in a given situation Therefore, all the talk alleging that the revolution did not develop the way it had been planned is groundless. This approach to the revolutionary process is not dialectical, for one cannot really advance a programme which it is impossible to implement. But when the programme has been fulfilled, a new programme is put forward containing the tasks achievable at the new stage.

### **Nationalism and Internationalism**

Our enemies have very widely used the thesis that the revolution was betrayed because we were linked with the communists. But the fact is that the very realization of the Moncada programme — agrarian and urban reforms, social laws and so on — sharpened the class struggle

and caused the resistance of counter revolutionary forces. The class struggle had also existed before, but it was not perceived with such clarity. That was an instinctive struggle of people hating the system but unaware of its theoretical essence. A revolution still more intensifies the class struggle. And when the class struggle is intensified, the peasants, the workers and all the poor group on one side and the rich on the other. There took place a demarcation of camps. In addition, the struggle assumed not only a national, but also an international character.

And this is very interesting! Anti communism in the course of the struggle tumbled down like a card house. People responded to Marxism and socialism. Some of them still had biases against the old communists, anti communism was still manifest in some form or other, but this no longer affected the problem of socialism in substance. Gradually this, too, was overcome and anti communism disappeared.

Some harm to the revolutionary process was done by the sectarianism of a number of 'old communists'. But we tackled this problem with great prudence in order to prevent a resurgence of anti-communism. Since most of the blame for the arising of this problem rests with Anibal Escalante and some other leaders from among the 'old communists', there was a danger that anti-sectarianism might be associated with anti-communism. All the necessary propaganda measures were taken to avoid this. Now I can say with good reason that not a trace is left of anti-communism in Cuba.

One more interesting feature. If we take our Insurgent Army, then, as far as I know, probably there would not have been even one per cent of soldiers who knew what socialism and communism are. Those men were workers and peasants. Among them there were comrades with great prejudices. This problem was also solved with a lot of caution. The appearance of doubts among these comrades and the difficulties they created were not a ground for expelling them. We consistently worked with them, tactfully persuading and educating them. And so, if we take our leading cadres holding important posts today, I must note that in the early period after the victory of the revolution it was impossible to talk with them about communism. Of those who fought in Sierra Maestra, not less than 95

per cent stayed with the revolution. In other words, if some of the Sierra Maestra men deserted, their number was no more than five in one hundred people. Thus, of the 95 per cent of the fighters, among whom there was not even one per cent of people who knew what communism is, no one has left the revolutionary ranks and they march together with the revolution towards socialism and communism. At the end of the war, we had 3,000 men under arms. Five per cent of this number amounts to 150 people. I doubt that we had 150 fighters who deserted from the revolutionary ranks for ideological reasons. For there were comrades who simply had some or other problems. I think that no more than a hundred people left the revolutionary ranks for ideological reasons. And I do not think that there would have been more than one per cent of those who had any clear idea of socialism before the victory on January 1, 1959.

Furthermore, if all those comrades had been asked upon the conclusion of the war whether they accepted communism, probably 95 per cent would have answered in the negative because they did not have a correct notion of it. For throughout their lives, beginning with birth, they had constantly heard that communism was a bad thing, that communism was a terrible thing and so on. That was a kind of conditioned reflex. And now I can say that these comrades are leaders of the party and the state, military commanders and members of the Communist Party. I think that this is a very interesting phenomenon. And it seems to me that this is the effect of the methods of revolutionary work with them: a considerate attitude to people, patience and the prevention of any abuses of power. I think that this played an important, very important role because people did not lose their faith in our revolution.



# MIGRANT WORKERS AND CITIZENSHIP

by Fundisi

If allowed to have their way, the Nationalist Government will turn our country into a vast labour camp of black South Africans who, deprived of citizenship, are transformed into foreign migrants, forced to take out work permits and employed on short-term labour contracts on the same terms as immigrants from Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Malawi

This monstrous violation of basic civil rights is being perpetrated in contemptuous disregard of African aspirations and legitimate claims, the dictates of social justice, economic rationality and world opinion. Only a large scale and persistent resistance will force the regime to abandon its attempts to destabilise and fragment the common society – the structural basis of our national democratic revolution for liberation from autocratic despotism.

Destabilisation in current political usage refers to subversive activities such as the Central Intelligence Agency conducts to unseat progressive governments as in Chile. In the present context, the term

is used to describe the campaign mounted by the bureaucracy to break up African family life and disrupt whole communities within the so-called 'white South Africa', which by arbitrary decree and ruthless discrimination encompasses no less than 87% of the entire country

Nationalist Party spokesmen have repeatedly declared a policy of uprooting African families in the 'white area' 'They are not here to anchor themselves', the Minister of Bantu Affairs said in October 1966. In August 1976 he stated that 'all Bantu persons in the white area, whether they were born there or not, remain members of their respective nations — the basis on which the Bantu are present in the white area is to sell their labour here and for nothing else'. Giving the fiction of separate 'nationhoods' a statutory content, Connie Mulder, the former Minister of Plural Relations, introduced the Bantu Citizenship Amendment Bill in February 1978. Its provisions, he said, would ensure that 'there would eventually be no black South Africans'.

Bantustan 'statehood' and the deprivation of S.A. citizenship add an ominous dimension to the traditional practice of employing worker-peasants from the reserves for specified periods and isolating them in 'single' quarters from their families. In its more virulent form, apartheid is a strategy for reducing all Africans to the status of migrant workers by expelling their dependants from employment centres in both town and country.

More than two million people have already been ousted from their home on white-owned rural land, where they lived as labour tenants, squatters or independent farmers. Another two million are scheduled for removal in the next ten years from urban areas on the pretext of being 'surplus' to labour requirements. Most of the destined victims, involving more than half the settled urban black population, are wives, mothers and children, the rest being unemployed, sick and old people who, deprived of family care, will be dumped on poverty-stricken communities in Bantustans.

The violent assault committed against the 20,000 residents of Crossroads in the Cape Peninsula is a particularly obnoxious event in the long sustained campaign of urban destabilisation, but there have been many similar acts of ruthless suppression. To recall only one, 90,000 Africans were hounded out of Durban's Cato Manor in

1958-65 in spite of much resistance by the inhabitants and the killing in 1960 of nine policemen while employed on a routine raid of the township.

Though similar in form to previous attacks on urban Africans, 'Operation Crossroads' has a special meaning in the strategy of destabilisation. Pretoria has decided to revive and expand a plan adopted in the early 1960s to expel Africans from the Western Cape. Traditionally limited to the Cape Peninsula and its hinterland, the affected area is now defined to include a vast region south east of a line stretching from Jeffreys Bay on the Indian Ocean to Upington on the Orange River.

In spite of declared policies and stringent controls, 80,000 migrant workers entered the Western Cape every year after 1970. By April 1975 there were 160,000 registered Africans in the region: 85,000 employed on contract and living without their families, while 66,500 had 'family rights' under section 10 of the Urban Areas Act. They are an integral part of the labour force and cannot be replaced. The demand for their expulsion comes not from employers, local authorities or the Coloured population, but from Afrikaner racists, leaders of the Nationalist Party and apartheid dogmatists who seek an illusory security at the cost of economic welfare, kinship ties and social justice.

In keeping with apartheid practices, displaced persons are resettled in the Bantustans. Both Transkei and Ciskei have rejected those expelled from Crossroads, but Pretoria insists that as 'homeland citizens' they cannot be denied admission. By accepting a spurious 'independence' the Bantustan leaders have become accomplices in a vile conspiracy against our people.

### **Bantustan Citizenship**

More than anything else, Bantustan chiefs seek international recognition. For this they need both land and people. The one they will not get from Pretoria, the other is showered upon them in overflowing measure, more than their underdeveloped and fragmented territories can absorb. By acts of the all-white parliament, millions of people have ceased to be S.A. citizens and are now in law citizens of Transkei and Bophuthatswana, the two Bantustans that were pronounced 'independent' on October 26, 1976.

and December 6, 1977 respectively.

The Afrikaner racists are great constitutionalists. They have an overpowering passion for legalisation of oppression in an infinite series of statutes, repeatedly amended to close loopholes uncovered in the courts or to make life more burdensome for blacks. Hence the amazing confusion of statutes enacted to impose alien status on people regardless of their wishes. To discover who is a Transkeian, one must study the Transkei Constitution Act, 1963 as amended in 1976, Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act, 1970 as amended in 1978, Bantu Homelands Constitution Act, 1971, as amended in 1974, Status of the Transkei Act, 1976; and the Republic of Transkei Constitution Act, 1976. As nearly as can be ascertained and as briefly described, Transkeian citizenship has been imposed on every person who was or is

- a citizen of Transkei at the date of its 'independence',
- born in Transkei of parents one or both of whom were Transkeian citizens at the time of birth;
- born outside Transkei whose father was a citizen of Transkei at the time of birth;
- born out of wedlock and outside Transkei whose mother was a citizen of Transkei at the time of birth;
- lawfully domiciled in Transkei for at least five years and who, on application, was granted Transkeian citizenship,
- a member of the Xhosa or Sotho language community of the Transkei;
- related to any member of the Transkeian population, or had identified himself with any part of that population, or was culturally or otherwise associated with any member or part of that population.

Transkei sets the pattern. Bophuthatswana's Status Act of 1977 follows it closely, as will measures taken in the next five years to foist a loathsome new 'identity' on twenty million Africans — made aliens in their own land by acts of parliament over which they have no control. Alienated, estranged and rejected by 'their' government, those who have a genuine feeling of devotion to their motherland, who claim the whole as their own, bitterly resent the injury inflicted on their sense of justice and self-esteem.

But their material loss is no less than the moral injury. As aliens, they have no share in the capital wealth accumulated out of the labour of generations of villagers who neglected their rural home, fields and cattle to develop areas to which the racist minority arrogantly asserts an exclusive right of ownership. As aliens, they lose their legal right to benefits from South Africa's unemployment insurance fund, old age pensions and invalidity grants. Exceptions have been made for existing contributors to the fund, but their entitlements expire on the completion of their contracts. Under agreements between Pretoria and Bantustan authorities, their 'citizens' residing at the time of 'independence' in white S A ' will receive pensions as before, but the concession, which can be withdrawn at any time, does not apply to persons who enter with a 'homelands' passport.

As aliens, Africans will not be allowed to enter the Republic without a Bantustan passport and visa issued by Pretoria's bureaucrats. As aliens, they must have permits to live and work in any part of the country that the white minority claims for themselves. As aliens, they have no security of employment or residence outside the Bantustans and can be deported at any time under executive orders against which no right of appeal lies to the courts.

This vast sea of insecurity will in time engulf all Africans including the children of urbanised parents protected against arbitrary removal by section 10 of the Urban Areas Act. Their legal right of residence is guaranteed if they were born in an urban area and lived there continuously since birth, or have worked there continuously for one employer for at least ten years, or have completed fifteen years of continuous lawful residence in the area; or are wives, unmarried daughters or sons under taxable age of qualified residents with whom they are ordinarily resident. Even this urban elite, however, has no absolute immunity. Any one of them can be driven out of his domicile on being declared an 'idle or undesirable person', of whom there are a dozen categories, or if found to be suffering from tuberculosis, venereal disease or chronic illness, or if his presence is held to weaken the state's security, public safety or law and order — in effect, if he is an active fighter for freedom.

The meagre rights grudgingly granted to an urban proletariat are now being eroded by amendments in 1978 to the pass laws. Children born after the date of 'independence' to Bantustan citizens can no longer qualify for urban residence under section 10, they too need an official permit to remain in the town where they were born and where their parents qualify for residential rights. Whereas Bantustan citizenship provides Pretoria with an opportunity to tighten the pass law shackles, it is having a disastrous effect on the rights and expectations of the new generation of urban blacks.

We have no illusions about the content or value of S A citizenship. It has always been an empty shell, a legal fiction without substance for Africans, who have neither the vote nor the right to represent themselves in legislative bodies. It does not guarantee a right to travel freely, or to live and work where we please, or to receive education and compete on equal terms with whites who alone are citizens. Blacks are mere subjects of a racist regime that discriminates and oppresses the majority in every sphere of social life.

But we also recognise in Bantustan citizenship a counter-revolutionary manoeuvre, a system of oppression introduced to confuse, divide and divert people from the goal of uniting their forces for the achievement of national liberation. We reject this hollow sham and demand full citizenship in a free and democratic country. Our aim must be to forge from the structure of citizenship a weapon of revolt against the autocracy.

### **Foreign Workers**

Race or colour, and not citizenship, constitutes the great divide. White aliens have always had far greater rights and privileges than black South Africans. An amendment made in 1978 to the Citizenship Act widens the gap by conferring automatic citizenship on white immigrants under 25 years after two years' residence. If they refuse, they receive a temporary resident's permit while those who accept citizenship become liable for military service. The measure underlines the racist character of the State and its subordination to Pretoria's militarism. Black South Africans, in contrast, are being deprived of citizenship after a long process of deterioration in their basic freedoms and legal status.



The erosion took a sharp turn for the worse under the apartheid regime. It introduced reference books in 1951, imposed a ban in 1955 on the entry into urban areas of Africans from Mozambique and countries to the north unless they had valid entry permits, instituted a network of labour bureaus in 1964 and under the Border Control Act of 1967 required immigrants from independent African states to produce passports, visas and work permits or labour contracts. Also in 1967 the administration ruled that no foreign African could acquire S A citizenship, even if he was married to a South African and had children born in S.A.

While clearing the ground for its major attack on black South Africans, Pretoria maintained an important constitutional distinction between them and foreign Africans. The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 provided that a citizen of a 'territorial area' forming part of the S.A. Republic would not be regarded as an alien but would remain for all purposes a citizen of the Republic which would accord him full protection according to international law. That guarantee was voided by the compulsory secession of Bantustans from the Republic and the consequential metamorphosis of their 'citizens' into aliens within the Republic.

A systematic campaign is now under way to reshape individual identities and fit them into the new constitutional mould. When an urbanised African applies for a first reference book or the replacement of a lost book or registration in a new job, the administration refuses to issue the required papers unless and until the applicant produces a Bantustan passport. Meanwhile he is issued with a temporary work permit valid for six months. The transition is now complete. No longer a citizen of the Republic, the worker is exposed to all the insecurities and bureaucratic harassment that beset the foreign migrant worker.

These procedures apply at present only to Transkeians and the peoples of Bophuthatswana but other sections of the population will be given the full treatment as the various Bantustans are pronounced independent and foreign enclaves within the Republic. Pretoria claims that the process will be completed within the next five years excepting KwaZulu, where Chief Gatsha Buthelezi rejects independence for Bantustans, denounces 'Homeland citizenship' and calls on Africans to resist 'with all their power the deprivation of

S. A. citizenship. To make a reality of the slogan, our revolution must mobilise the people for a renewed attack on pass laws and for the complete liquidation of the migratory labour system.

### **Migrant Workers in S.A.**

In what follows we retain the familiar demarcation between 'South African' and 'foreign' workers both for analytical purposes and because we reject the concept and practice of separate Bantustan 'citizenships' as an outrageous violation of basic rights and freedoms. On another point of explanation, much of the material used in this part of the article comes from papers presented to the Conference of Migratory Labour held under the auspices of the ECA and MULPOC on April 4-8, 1978 at Lusaka.

Among the participants and observers were representatives and observers of countries that supply migratory workers to S. A., various other African States, liberation movements operating in the region, international agencies and trade union centres. The main purpose was to devise means of putting an end to the migratory labour system, partly by developing the resources of supplier countries to create alternative job opportunities. The countries concerned — Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique — strongly resent their inherited dependence on the apartheid economy and labour migration, which deprives them of manpower, unbalances social structures, retards agricultural and industrial growth, and weakens their control of imports, capital accumulation and investments. Even greater anxiety is shown by some leaders about the effects of long, recurring periods of separation from wives and children, the interrelated features of pederasty, drugtaking and authoritarianism in labour compounds, the hardships and indignities inflicted on miners; and gross discrimination in wage rates, job opportunities, training facilities, promotion prospects, housing and social services. The suppliers want to disengage from S.A. and rid themselves of the stigma attached to providing quotas of black workers as though they were human merchandise.

Disengagement, however, is being seen as a matter of necessity rather than a decision of choice. The plain fact is that Pretoria has taken the initiative by reducing the intake of foreign workers and imposing quotas on suppliers. The process, which began in the

1960s, was first aimed at the exclusion of foreign workers from manufacturing, commerce, services and agriculture. By 1977, the number of foreign men employed in these sectors had been reduced to an estimated 80,000, half of whom were in agriculture. A simultaneous attack on the position of foreign African women in S.A. effected a reduction in their number from 102,000 in 1960 to 43,000 in 1970. The only substantial remaining group of foreign Africans were the men employed in mining, the industry that has always depended heavily on external labour sources. But they too have come under attack in recent years. Whereas the proportion of foreigners in the African labour force of gold mines had risen from 65% in 1951-66 to 80% in 1973, it fell to 55% in 1976 and now approaches 40%, the lowest in the history of mining.

The downward trend has been planned. The Chamber of Mines announced in 1976 that it would increase the number of South Africans employed to 50% at least of the African labour force. On so short a run, it is difficult to assess whether the trend signifies a permanent change in the pattern of labour organisation or rather a temporary adjustment to economic recession and mounting unemployment among blacks. An economic revival, resulting in serious labour scarcities, may be expected to encourage a return to traditional recruiting practices in neighbouring states and an increased intake of foreign workers. With this prospect in mind, supplier countries hope to implement development programmes to diminish their dependence on the S. A. labour market.

At the present time, therefore, both sides favour a measure of disengagement though for very different reasons. Pretoria and the mining companies are responding defensively to progressive changes in the sub-continent, the emergence of independent states, socialist revolutions in Mozambique and Angola, the spread of armed struggle and the growth of anti-apartheid forces in the region. The implications of independence were dramatically illustrated in 1974 by Malawi's ban on recruiting for the mines after 74 Malawian miners had died in a Wenela plane crash at Francistown in Botswana. To protect themselves against similar action by other suppliers, the companies wished to scale down their dependence on external labour sources.

Yet another cause for concern among mine managements is the spread of national and class consciousness in the ranks of the miners. Some have had a primary school education but find underground mining more remunerative than teaching or clerical jobs in their own country. Such men are more likely than unschooled peasants to resent abuse of authority or violence by white supervisors and miners. Those with less schooling are being politically educated by their party leaders. Mozambicans, for instance, are deeply committed to Frelimo, listen eagerly to radio Maputo, denounce colonial capitalism and freely criticise the shortcomings of mine managements. Men from Lesotho tend to support the opposition Basotholand Congress Party, while Transkeians generally distrust the Matanzima administration and disagree about the merits of Bantustan independence.

This political ferment, coupled with a growing awareness of class exploitation and race discrimination, found an outlet in a series of strikes and inter group clashes on gold and coal mines between September 1973 and June 1976. An estimated number of 178 Africans died in these encounters, more than 1,000 suffered severe injuries and 520 were prosecuted. Many of the casualties occurred in violent clashes between ethnic or national groups, often because of protests against unequal treatment at the hands of managements or the refusal of some groups to join hands with militants against the management and for wage increases or redress of grievances. A government inter departmental committee appointed to investigate the resistance movement predictably put the blame on 'tribalist' rivalries which, it said, accounted for 33 of the 54 violent outbreaks, as compared with 10 strikes over wages or conditions and 11 disputes related to special grievances of Lesotho and Malawi workers. However, given the practice of suppressing any inclusive trade unionism, fostering separate ethnic identities and dividing miners by race, language and nationality, almost any kind of group action, from football matches to wage claims, is likely to take the semblance of ethnic factionalism. The underlying causes stem from the repressive dehumanizing aspects of compound life, the dangers of underground mining to life and limb, an overt hostility to colour bars and wage inequities, a maturing political consciousness and, as the interdepartmental committee acknowledged, an awareness

among the miners of their enormous latent strength for industrial action.

As in the great miners' strike of 1946, large contingents of miners reacted to the police violence and inter group fighting by packing their trunks for the homeward journey. Between 30 and 50 thousand are said to have broken their contract in the period September 1973 to September 1975 but, unlike in 1946, the government and mine managements made no attempt to prosecute them or stop their repatriation. The large scale withdrawal of labour, especially by men from Malawi, Lesotho and Mozambique, disrupted operations and reduced output on the affected mines, notably Western Deep Levels and East Rand Proprietary Mines, the latter losing 58% of its African work force in the last quarter of 1974 when the tonnage of ore milled dropped by  $\frac{1}{3}$  as compared with the previous quarter's output. It is against this background that one should judge the importance of the inter departmental committee's recommendation to give S.A. nationals preference over foreigners, or the decision of the Chamber, referred to earlier, to increase the quota of S A nationals to 50% of the mine labour force.

### **Wages and Labour Stabilisation**

To reduce the foreign component in their labour force, the companies have had to overcome the distaste of South Africans for compound life and underground work. The obvious first step was to improve wage rates, which were abominably low and stagnant, lagging far behind the wages paid to factory, construction and transport workers. (In what follows we compare average money wages and exclude the cost of housing, food and medical services supplied to African miners at no direct charge). While the annual wage of African factory workers rose from R192 in 1944 to R657 in 1971, the African miner's wage remained fairly static at R216 a year. In the same period, however, the white miner's wage increased four fold, from R1,106 to R4,633 a year, the gap having widened considerably since the turn of the century. White miners earned 10 times as much as Africans in 1911 and 21 times as much in 1971. In that year, when white miners' wages rose by 14% from R316 to R360.80 a month, African miners received a miserly rise of 30 cents, giving them a monthly wage of R18.30. This shabby treatment, the

flagrantly scandalous discrimination and the example set by Durban's striking workers in 1973 had much to do with the outbreaks of violence on mines in 1973-76

Providence in the form of the capitalist monetary crisis and the decline in the dollar's value came to the rescue of the companies. The free market price of gold soared well above the official rate of \$38 an ounce to \$49.35 in April 1972, \$126 in June 1973 and \$140 in January 1977. Taking advantage of the bonanza, white miners successfully renewed their demands for pay rises and obtained an average increase of more than R80 a month in 1973 — nearly three times the African's wage of R29. Hereafter, however, a surprising upward swing took place in African wages, which rose by 240% from R29 in 1973 to R99 in June 1977. White miners' wages rose in the same period by 62.5% from R475 to R772 a month.

African miners have done far better than factory workers in recent years. The factory wage of R72 in 1973 was 2½ times the miner's wage. In 1977 the factory wage rose to R138 a month, only 1⅓ times the miner's wage. But the miner receives in kind an estimated amount of R40 a month which, added to his cash earnings, gives him a total income of R139, almost exactly the factory worker's average wage. The miner is actually better off, since his rural family is largely self-supporting, whereas the factory worker who lives with his family has to meet the cost of rent, food, transport, education and medical care for his wife and children. In wage terms, therefore, and apart from working and living conditions, the mines appear to be well placed to compete for urban workers on equal footing with secondary industry.

This prospect is related to other factors, such as labour rationalisation, the substitution of machines for men, the continuous employment of skilled Africans, family housing and a modification of colour bars. Though large scale mechanisation seems unlikely as long as the companies have access to abundant supplies of low paid workers, the upward movement of wages may well stimulate a search for labour saving procedures and intermediate technologies operated by a corps of permanently settled African miners. Tony Fleischer, general manager of the Mine Labour Organisation, has proposed a 'two tier system', with one layer of skilled men recruited in white areas and another of migrants from independent states and



Bantustans 'To attract S.A. nationals, however, the industry will need to offer stable social conditions and encourage a higher proportion of South African Blacks to become stabilised on or near long life mines' Arguing along similar lines, the Anglo American Corporation maintains that the provision of married quarters for skilled Africans 'is vital to the companies' future mechanisation programmes because there is a growing shortage of operators capable of handling the more sophisticated equipment currently being purchased'.

Government regulations allow managements to accommodate up to 3% of their African employees in family houses. The Corporation claims that it is doing what it can within the narrow legal limits to build houses for Africans 'occupying key positions'. It acknowledges that as much should be done for other workers to correct the social distortions resulting from the prolonged separation of men from their families. But 'even if this were legally possible, the cost of building sufficient married accommodation to house black married men employed by the mines is quite beyond the financial resources of an industry in which the production units have finite lives'. Yet, though individual mines come and go, the industry has flourished for more than a century and shows no signs of sudden death. The argument about cost is a stock in trade of the owners. They used it in 1914 to oppose expert advice that family housing along the Reef would save African miners from deaths caused by pneumonia; and again on Zambia's Copperbelt under colonial rule. We reject the argument and denounce compound housing and migratory labour as major instruments of super exploitation and political repression.

Only now, because of increased labour costs and scarcities, and under pressure by anti-apartheid movements, have some companies been converted to an acceptance of stabilisation. De Beers Consolidated announced in 1976 that it planned to phase out the migrant labour system at Kimberley and Koffiefontein, where more than half the labour force were 'local black employees' for whom houses were being built. Palabora Copper Mine, owned by Rio Tinto Zinc, has built 850 houses with three bedrooms for married Africans which with government housing would constitute a stock of 2,350 family houses. The company, said the chairman, was not in the gold mining business in S.A. because it refused to employ workers under

short-term contracts or house them in compounds. Though symptomatic of trends, such cases are untypical and of marginal significance. We realise that there is no possibility of scrapping labour migration within the structure of apartheid and gross exploitation. However, we should take note of current changes affecting patterns of labour organisation and the demarcation of work between white and African miners.

### **Skilled Work under Colour Bars**

The division of work between Africans and whites has less to do with skill or experience than with convention, racial attitudes and the vested interests of organised white workers who protect their monopoly of sheltered and well paid jobs. Although the work of African miners is no less skilled than work done by miners in Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union and United States, all but a handful are classified as 'unskilled' because they are black and paid less than a subsistence wage.

Job reservation by skin colour made its first appearance on gold mines in the latter years of Kruger's Boer Republic. After its defeat, the British administration added to the list of jobs reserved for whites. The Botha Smuts government of 1910 and the Nationalist-Labour Pact Government of 1924 entrenched the white workers' monopoly of 32 specified mining operations under regulations which disqualify Africans and Asians from obtaining certificates of competency. Another wide range of jobs is reserved for whites by custom and trade union pressure. Nevertheless, when white employees complained of getting insufficient 'protection', parliament in 1959 extended the discriminatory clauses of the Industrial Conciliation Act 1956 to the mining industry.

Colour bar constraints on the deployment of mine workers came under renewed pressure in the mid sixties, when rapid economic growth gave rise to a shortage of skilled men. The mining companies said they needed at least 2,000 more trained miners and artisans who were not to be found in S. A. or abroad, even though foreign white novices were paid while being trained five times the wage of an African with ten to twenty years of experience underground. During a campaign for wage increases the Mine Workers Union agreed in 1965 to allow selected 'boss boys' to supervise African workers. In

return for this concession white daily paid men would be given the status of salaried staff, entitling them to a big wage rise, pensions and leave privileges. But the agreement broke down and was cancelled because of opposition by a section of the union and verkrampte Nationalist Party members of parliament who threatened to form a breakaway party in support of colour bars and rejection of Bantustans.

The next round of negotiations, conducted as gold prices were soaring, had more success. Two unions, representing reduction workers and engine drivers, dissolved to form the 'Technical Officials' Association (TOA) whose members received the status of mine officials. Separate agreements were made in 1971 with the TOA, the MWU and the Federation of Mining Unions, which embraced five groups of artisans. All white employees obtained wage increases ranging from R80 to R100 a month. The reciprocal concessions allowed the companies to employ up to 14,000 Africans as 'artisan aides', employ Africans to drive underground locomotives transporting whites, and delegate responsibilities to black supervisors, the number of whom was increased from three to five in every team of 45 Africans. As always, only whites may hold blasting certificates, but African supervisors are now authorised to enter working places after blasting and start work without permission from a white miner. The supervisors may also instruct drillers on the position and direction of holes to be drilled for purposes other than blasting. Africans may now prepare primers and activate charges, but only under direct white supervision.

The moderate dilution of white work categories affected under these arrangements did hardly more than legitimize the assignment of operations to Africans which they had undertaken for years in breach of mining regulations and without recognition or reward, but with the knowledge and connivance of whites. By putting the stamp of official approval on the revised job categories, mine owners and white unions merely exposed the hypocrisy involved in the conventional division of labour according to skill and colour. Under the revised schedules adopted in June 1975 African underground workers fall into eight grades of which 7% are regarded as skilled, 50% semi skilled and 43% unskilled. Only the small group of 'skilled' men qualify for family housing on Anglo American group

mines, and many of them are surface workers, employed as clerks, personnel officers, police and security guards. The companies call them 'key men' and give them preferential treatment in housing allocations and wage increases. For instance, Anglo-American in 1973 raised the maximum monthly wage of 800 underground supervisors from R68 to R104 while personnel and training officers received a maximum of R222.

African workers were never consulted about these changes, any benefit accruing to them being subsidiary to the particular interests of employers and white workers. Job rescheduling is seen as an opportunity for whites to secure further advantages, as in the dispute over the five day week, which led to the introduction in 1977 of the 11-shift fortnight for rockbreakers, general miners and some other sections of the MWU, while Africans continued to work a six day week. To make this arrangement feasible, the mining regulations were amended so as to allow white miners to instruct Africans 'to charge up two development ends simultaneously', thereby ensuring full production under diminished white supervision.

The vital statistics of gold mining reveal a great affluence. In comparison with 1976, the industry's working profits rose by R165.6 million or 18.6% to R1,054.4 million, of which taxes and the State's share absorbed R495.7 million or 47%, as compared with 44.3% in 1976. Some of the prosperity spilled over into the wage envelopes of African workers, but the bulk went to shareholders, the government and white employees. The whites constitute only 10% of the labour force, but in 1973 received in wage increases about the same amount as the increase granted to Africans who make up the remaining 90%. In so far as it contributes to this prosperity, we must assume that white miners, like employers and the government, will continue to enforce the migratory labour system with modifications to suit changing conditions and themselves.

### **Labour Migration Perspectives**

Migrant labour is the taproot of South Africa's industrial capitalism. Instead of being eroded by industrial development, as some economists and sociologists predicted, the system has spread from mines and farms to railways, docks, construction works, factories, shops and offices. Of every five African men working in 'white S.A.',

three are temporary migrants. They spend on an average half their working lives away from wives and children in periodical bouts of wage earning, interspersed with visits once or twice in every two years to their rural homes. The migrant labour population has grown faster than the general African population and faster than the number of jobs available to Africans.

These trends are the reverse of what happens in a free society. When people are free to emigrate, live and work where they like, they tend to settle permanently in families around their place of work. As urbanisation grows, temporary migration fades away.

Population movements in S.A. generally conform to these basic principles. There has been a persistent shift of all ethnic groups from rural to urban areas. The urban African population alone grew from 508,000 in 1911 to 3,471,000 in 1960, the female section increasing by 1,377% and the male by 393%. The inherent tendency towards a balanced sex ratio has been interrupted, however, by the effects of pass laws, bureaucratic controls and destabilisation policies, introduced to break up family units and drive women out of towns.

The 1970 census returns recorded an urban African population of 4,989,000, but the figures conceal a gross deception. They exclude thousands of African families who, previously enumerated as urban residents, were resettled between the census years in African towns within Bantustans bordering on 'white' industrial centres. The breadwinners, both men and women, commute daily for work in the 'white' areas. Apart from heavy travelling costs, their economic position is unchanged, but as Bantustan residents they become 'foreign migrant workers' in 'white S.A.'. The total population of 'homeland towns' was estimated at 973,000 in 1973. It is impossible from the available information to determine the number of these permanently employed in 'white' areas as distinct from temporary migrants and persons working within the Bantustans.

Statistical manipulation and population transfers provide spurious backing for claims that urban black communities are being liquidated, but the window-dressing is trivial in comparison with the worker's real loss of security and bargaining power. Reclassified, obliged to take Bantustan citizenship and issued with passport, visa and work permit, he is at the mercy of labour officers who place him in jobs under contract. If unlawfully employed, or unemployed for

more than four months in any year, he is liable to be declared an 'idle black' and detained for two years in a penal institution or deported to his 'home country'.

There are no compensating advantages. Living standards and opportunities will deteriorate in backward, underground Bantustans, under fragile administrations burdened with the problem of finding houses, schools, medical and other services for a large black proletariat. Squatter towns have already mushroomed, one with 250,000 residents in KwaZulu, another with 350,000 in Bophuthatswana, to accommodate displaced families.

Up to 70% of economically active people in Bantustans are commuters and migrants who work in the 'white' area. From 20% to 35% of their earnings flow back in cash and goods to their families. The balance is spent in the 'white' area, the main beneficiary. Employers, taxpayers and public authorities are able to invest resources which were formerly used to provide infrastructures for urban Africans in profit making enterprises, while continuing to draw on supplies of ready made workers reared and educated in a 'foreign' country at no cost to the 'white' economy.

The amount that the migrant's family receives from his earnings is about half its total income, the rest coming from own production. This portion diminishes as population densities increase and soil fertility declines. A large number of Transkeian families are landless or occupy holdings scarcely bigger and often less productive than a fair sized suburban garden. Women as well as men are being forced to seek work outside Bantustans and in growing numbers. The number of Transkeians working on mines increased two fold from 49,000 to 97,000 between 1970 and 1977. The Transkei exemplifies in its most advanced form the process of transforming peasants into migrant peasant workers and finally into landless migrant workers who depend wholly on wages earned in the 'external' economy.

Of the independent supplier states, only Lesotho is deeply involved in the migratory labour system. With a population of 1,200,000, it supplied 180,000 workers to S.A. in 1977, 140,000 of whom went to the mines. The miners' earnings contributed 55.4% of Lesotho's national income and actually exceeded the gross domestic product. As in the peasant reserves of S.A. the exodus has a depressing effect on agricultural development which is virtually



stagnant. The number of landless households increases, average farm outputs decline, and dependence on migrant income grows. Agriculture has become a subsidiary activity in recent years for most Basotho.

Mozambique's dependence on the system, at one time almost as great as Lesotho's, underwent a drastic change in 1976 when mining companies unilaterally imposed a quota limiting recruitment of Mozambicans to 30,000 a year whereas the annual intake had averaged 100,000 in the preceding period. A substantial number of miners acquired skills as artisan aides, drivers or supervisors that were needed in the Mozambican economy. This gain was overshadowed however by the tendency of many migrants, especially in the lower income groups, to neglect their farms. The overall result has been a decline of peasant production to the level where it no longer supports the family.

### **The Conference on Migratory Labour**

Two basic propositions emerged from the deliberations. Firstly, migrant labour inflicts severe and lasting damage on the peoples of the region and their economies. Secondly, no worthwhile reforms can be carried out within the structures of apartheid. Therefore, the conference concluded, the prime requirement of the region was to put an end as speedily as possible to the migratory labour system.

Disengagement and stabilisation were the strategies adopted. The one involves a radical transformation of domestic economies, the other a removal of pass laws and other hindrances to the permanent settlement of workers in family units at their place of work. The two lines of approach converge. To taper off the supply of workers, countries need to expand their internal employment opportunities, while a big decrease in the size of the migrant labour force is reciprocally necessary to facilitate economic development.

Disengagement from S.A. is a revolutionary process, covering a much wider range of action than the withdrawal of migrant workers. Mozambique and BLS (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland) are tightly locked into South Africa's economy by road and rail links, a customs union, investment flows and a large volume of trade. To get out of this stranglehold, governments and people will have to revolutionise their societies, pull down old structures and create new ties with one

another and with other countries. A few commonplace facts will give an idea of the effort required to disengage.

S.A. is by far the biggest trading partner of BLS and provides them with a large part of their food requirements. The customs union is an important source of their income and provides Lesotho with one third of its public revenues. S.A. goods have free access to internal markets in the region and are popular, but leave little scope for the growth of local manufactures. S.A. supplies the bulk of capital invested in mining, construction and manufacturing in BLS. The two leading commercial banks in S.A., Barclays International and Standard Chartered, channel most of the capital moving in and out of BLS. Nearly all mining enterprises belong to the S.A. multinationals Anglo American and De Beers, in partnership with the BLS governments. Though Mozambique has a somewhat different economic pattern it is hardly less geared to S.A.'s economy, from which it derived 15% of current income from migrant workers' earnings in 1975 and much of the 27% that came from railway and harbour charges.

So much for the difficulties. They are not insuperable. Some supplier states have achieved a fair amount of diversification, though admittedly often with injections of capital and technology from S.A. But for far-reaching and permanent solutions, long term planning is necessary along the lines suggested by the conference in a key resolution. This states that 'Each supplier country should undertake to plan its economic development in such a way as to restructure its economy through industrialization, agricultural and rural transformation and the development of other productive activities'. In more specific terms, the conference called for the elimination of poverty, a more equal distribution of wealth, the reform of landholdings, an increase of productive capacity of family farmers, and action to reduce the control of domestic economies by transnational corporations.

Admirable sentiments! One hears them often stated at international gatherings and on party platforms when leaders of developing countries call for unity against colonialism, capitalism, fascism and their 'neo varieties'. Truth, no doubt, can bear repetition, but unfulfilled promises lose credibility. Peasants and workers were conspicuously absent from the conference table. Only

when they sit down with Party and Government to plan their future will disengagement become a reality

By and large, the sources of migratory labour will dry up to the extent that disengagement measures succeed in generating suitable job opportunities at home. This is something that the independent states hope to accomplish, with considerable financial and technical aid from outside. The Bantustans, however, neither wish nor attempt to disengage. They are now the principal sources of migrant workers and will become the sole suppliers if external flows are discontinued. But this is not an immediate prospect. For an indeterminate period, the African labour force will consist of three distinct socio-legal categories: external foreign migrant workers, internal migrants reclassified as 'foreign', and black South Africans domiciled in 'white S.A.'. Members of these groups will continue to work and live side by side.

The conference took note of South Africa's attempts 'to abolish the distinction between internal and external migrants'. This situation, it declared, 'had created an unshakeable foundation for a common struggle by a united working force'. To coordinate the struggle, a Southern Africa Labour Committee would be formed, consisting of representatives of supplier States and workers' organisations. Among other functions, the Committee was charged with the task of implementing a *Charter of Rights for Migrant Workers in Southern Africa*.

The Charter is a statement of rights: to freedom of trade unionism, movement, residence, occupation, equal pay and education. If these demands were implemented, race and colour bars would disappear, together with pass laws and enforced labour migration. The decisive clause in this respect states that all workers shall have the right to be accommodated near their place of work with their families in suitable houses under home ownership schemes or to reside elsewhere if they choose to do so.

The demands aren't new. They've been the focus of our struggle for most of the century. Men have died in battle against armed forces, millions have been jailed in the fights against pass laws, influx controls, urban removals and destabilisation policies. In the two years 1974/5 and 1975/6 three quarters of a million men and women were brought to trial for offences against the pass laws. They too

must be numbered among fighters for freedom of movement and residence. More than 25,000 'foreigners' were charged with illegal entry into urban areas. If we fail to stop the rot, all pass law victims will in time come to be recorded as 'foreign blacks'!

It is with these trends in mind that the Conference called for a united front between supplier states, liberation movements and the workers of Southern Africa against the migrant labour system. That is a new and important advance. For the first time South Africa's neighbours have publicly committed themselves to a joint struggle with our forces against the autocracy. It is for us, the revolutionary movement, to utilize the opportunity and mobilise the peoples of Southern Africa against the migrant labour system, deprivation of citizenship and autocratic absolutism.

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# GOLD AND THE DOLLAR

by Phineas Malinga

When the European Economic Community was founded, they invented a new unit called the *European Unit of Account* for the purpose of calculating various transactions between the member states. The value of this unit was equal to one US dollar. On January 2, 1979, the European Unit of Account was worth 1.38 US dollars. Thus in the course of twenty years, the dollar has lost over a quarter of its purchasing power by comparison with the *average* of West European countries (for that is, roughly speaking, how the value of the European Unit of Account is calculated).

It follows that the loss has been far greater by comparison with the stronger European currencies such as the Deutschmark. But the implications of the figure quoted above go far beyond the mere loss of purchasing power (a phenomenon common to the currencies of all capitalist states in recent times). It is necessary to ask why the EUA was valued at one dollar in the first place.

The answer is that the dollar was so widely used throughout the capitalist world for international trade, for the quotation of prices across frontiers etc., that it seemed obvious to the West Europeans in the nineteen fifties, that the most convenient unit for their purposes would be a unit of the same size. Moreover, since the dollar had a fixed value in terms of gold, it was possible to adopt it as a unit for practical purposes while avoiding the indignity of actually naming an American currency unit as the common standard for Europeans. The official definition of the EUA was in terms of gold — the same number of grams of gold which at that time represented the value of one dollar.

This convenient state of affairs came to an end when the USA broke the link between gold and the dollar. The Europeans then had to think again and decide what the future definition of the EUA should be. They could have kept it linked to the dollar. The fact that they decided not to do so marked a significant stage in the decline of the dollar's absolute predominance as the international currency unit of the capitalist world.

They could also, theoretically at least, have kept the EUA linked to gold. Though this course of action would have been attractive to the French government, with its known preference for gold as an international medium of exchange, it had to be rejected as impracticable at that time. The Americans (for reasons which we shall examine in a moment) had thrown the gold market into a state of such turmoil that gold could for the time being not function as a stabilising factor. The Europeans thus turned to the third alternative, which was to define the EUA in terms of a *basket* of their own national currencies.

Thus the three standards which had been equivalent — gold, dollar and EUA — were left to go their separate ways and it was left to the market to pronounce upon their respective merits. The verdict of the market has been very clear. If three men had \$100 each in 1969, one kept his money in dollars, the second put it in European Units of Account and the third put it into gold, the second would today have \$138, while the third would have over \$200 (or about 145 EUA).



## **Trial of Strength**

This is the outcome to date of a direct trial of strength between the dollar and gold — a trial of strength deliberately provoked by the US government. When they were forced to break the link between the dollar and gold, the American authorities embarked on a campaign to ensure that, of these two joint kings of the international monetary scene, it would be the dollar that would survive to reign alone, while gold would be discarded.

In obedience to American orders, the International Monetary Fund passed resolutions formally 'demonetising' gold. Both directly and through the IMF, the Americans organised selling raids on the world gold market, with a view to driving the price down. These had only the most temporary success. The institution of periodic gold sales by the IMF brought the price down from about \$160 per ounce to below \$100 for a matter of months, but within a year the price had recovered. The Carter Administration's own gold sales in 1978 brought the price down from \$240 to just under \$200, but this time the effect lasted only for a matter of weeks.

By the end of January 1979, the \$240 level had been almost regained. This was hardly a matter for surprise, as the 1978 sales were clearly embarked upon from a position of weakness, in an attempt to check the rapid decline in the value of the dollar on international exchange markets. Since monetary reserves of gold exist precisely for the purpose of being sold to remedy an adverse balance of payments and check a currency depreciation, these sales did nothing for the credibility of demonetisation.

What may perhaps prove to be the final nail in the coffin of demonetisation came in January 1979, when the West Europeans launched their new *European Monetary System* and for this purpose officially revalued their gold reserves at the market rate. This was entirely consistent with French policy down the years, but represented a significant new departure for the British and West Germans — hitherto very obedient to American doctrine in monetary affairs.

The defeat of American monetary policy is one which the Americans have brought upon themselves. For a quarter of a century after the end of the Second World War, they systematically abused the advantages conferred upon them by the special position of the

dollar in the world economy. This process of abuse has been well described by the French writer, Jean-Jacques Servan Schreier, in his classic work *Le Défi Américain*. He records the way in which the Americans used the international acceptability of the dollar and the highly favourable exchange rates which it enjoyed in the fifties and sixties to buy up capital assets throughout the world at prices favourable to themselves.

The volume of dollars created for transactions of this kind bore no relation to the requirements of the United States domestic economy. The inevitable result was a surplus of dollars in international circulation and an eventual fall in the value of the dollar. The importance of this fall must not be exaggerated. The Americans remain in possession of the capital assets which they bought while the buying was good. Their position in the world's export markets will be strengthened by a cheaper dollar. Therefore American imperialist domination of the non socialist world is by no means at an end. What has failed is only one particular aspect of the United States plans for world domination, i.e. the establishment of the dollar on a permanent basis as the only international currency. Their failure takes its place among other signs that American imperialism is in decline, without being in itself decisive.

### **Effect on South Africa**

The South African economy is somewhat more diversified than it was in the first half of the century. Gold and agriculture no longer constitute the only substantial credit items in the country's balance of payments. Gold nevertheless remains an item of absolutely crucial importance. Its importance has in fact increased over the last three years, owing to the decline in the inflow of foreign capital to South Africa. This decline was caused by the shock administered to the confidence of international capitalists in South Africa by the Soweto uprising. The total amount borrowed in international markets by South African borrowers (both government and private) fell to \$64 million in 1976 and \$23 million in 1977, having been running at the rate of hundreds of millions per annum for many years up to 1975. Some recovery was seen in 1978 and in November of that year the South Africans announced with obvious relief and satisfaction that they had succeeded in obtaining credits of up to \$150 million from a

consortium of West German and Swiss banks — the Deutsche Bank, the Dresdner Bank, and the Union Bank of Switzerland

The source of these credits is significant. It would appear that virtually all South African borrowing has now been transferred from its traditional arena — London and New York — to West Germany and Switzerland. West Germany has become particularly important in this regard. In addition to the two banks named above, the Bayerische Vereinsbank, BHF Bank, Bayerische Hypotheken and Wechselbank and the Commerzbank have been involved. The German Capital Markets Sub-Committee, the body responsible for allocating places in the 'queue' for capital issues on the West German market, started featuring South African issues in its monthly calendar during 1978.

There are both political and economic reasons for this new German predominance. On the political side, West Germany is not as much concerned as the USA and Britain with currying favour among independent African states, and is therefore less inhibited about overt links with South Africa. Economically, the key factor is the strength of the Deutschmark by comparison with the dollar. The resulting inflow of capital to West Germany has put them in a position to take over a part of America's former role as a source of finance capital for the whole imperialist sphere of influence.

The total inflow of capital to South Africa nevertheless remains modest by comparison with the levels of a few years ago. The problem of increasing the flow has recently been considered by a Commission headed by the Governor of the S.A. Reserve Bank, Dr de Kock. The first measure in implementation of its proposals was announced on January 25. The fixed value of the rand in dollar terms was then abandoned in favour of a floating exchange rate. At the same time, a new market in 'financial rands' was created. Foreign investors will be allowed to buy these financial rands which are expected to be appreciably cheaper than ordinary rands, and they will thus acquire their investments at a discount.

Anyone withdrawing his investment will also have to use the financial rand market, so that there will be no possibility of making a capital profit out of the discount. Dividends, however, will be payable in ordinary rands, so that the foreign investor will obtain an

inflated yield on his investment as long as he leaves it in South Africa. He will also be better off than foreign investors have hitherto been, since in the past they have had to purchase their investments at the normal rate but could only sell them for 'securities rands', which stood at a discount of 40% on the normal rate.

As this article goes to press it is not yet possible to judge the success of the January measures. Nevertheless, the mere fact that such measures were necessary indicates that the capital account is unlikely ever to return to its former favourable state.

The balance of payments problem is therefore much more delicate and critical. South Africa suffers along with other primary producers from the generally low prevailing prices of copper and base metals. Thus the strength of gold and diamond prices has been absolutely crucial in keeping the South African economy going. Estimated figures for 1978 released by the Chamber of Mines indicate that South Africa's total revenue from minerals was in the region of R6,500 million, which represented a 20% increase over 1977. The increase was mainly attributed to gold and diamonds, with gold much the more important of the two.

### **Sale of Coins**

An important new feature of the gold market in recent years has been the sale of Krugerrand coins. These were introduced in the early sixties as a convenient way in which gold could be purchased by the general public. It took about ten years for the idea to catch on. Today, the Krugerrand is widely known as an investment medium suitable both for large-scale investors and for the petty bourgeoisie, not only in countries such as France, where there is a long tradition of hoarding gold coins, but also in Britain and the United States, where until recently the comparative stability of the currency made such hoarding unnecessary.

The number of coins sold was 3.3 million in 1977 and 6 million in 1978, but the latter figure probably underestimates the present trend, as towards the end of 1978 sales were approaching one million per month. If this level of demand were to be sustained, South Africa would be able to dispose of about half of her total gold production in

the form of Krugerrand coins. Since industrial demand is more than capable of absorbing the other half, it is apparent that the market is widely and firmly based, and not at all dependent on demand for monetary purposes by governments.

Therefore it is not true today (as it was at one time) that the cessation of government purchases of South African gold represents a form of economic sanction which could easily be applied, with devastating effect. Any sanctions in this field would now have to take the form of an embargo on purchases of gold by the numerous private purchasers, for investment and industrial purposes, throughout the world. Given the nature of the gold market — highly internationalised, habitually secretive and uniquely experienced in smuggling and evasion — sanctions would probably be more difficult to enforce in this field than in others.

The weakness of the dollar has been doubly useful to South Africa in this period. Not only has it contributed to the strength of the gold market and the steady increase of the world gold price, but it has also ensured the profitability of the gold mining industry. The exchange rate of the rand has been tied to that of the dollar, thus ensuring that increases in the dollar price of gold are matched by increases in the rand price. What this means in real terms is that the value of the wages paid to the miners, being calculated in rands, has been steadily depressed. The mineowners have even been able to offer paper increases in wages, thus temporarily damping down the workers' discontent, without damage to profitability or real benefit to the workers.

The January 1979 break of the tie between the rand and the dollar is intended to accentuate this process, not change it. The result of 'floating' is expected to be that the exchange rate of the rand will decline in dollar terms. In balance of payment terms, this will make no difference; the amount of foreign exchange obtained for South Africa's gold will remain the same. In profitability terms, however, the position of the mine owners will be improved; they will pay out less to get the gold out of the ground. For the black working class, this means price rises even more crippling than those of 1977, when mealie meal went up by 23%, sugar by 26%, pilchards by 51% and rents in some areas by 53%.

## Conclusions

Basically, therefore, the situation remains as it has been since gold was discovered in Johannesburg nearly a hundred years ago. The gold mining industry is still a crucial element in the strength of capitalism in South Africa, the survival of the racist system and the importance of South Africa for world imperialism. Vis-a-vis the headquarters of world imperialism, the United States, South Africa's position is stronger than it used to be. Dependence on gold does not render South Africa vulnerable to the sort of pressure which anti-apartheid elements in the West might, theoretically, apply in favour of reformist policies.

From the point of view of the liberation movement, however, dependence on gold does render South Africa vulnerable. The gold mines, with their immense and irreplaceable black labour force, represent a key point which the liberation movement can and must attack.

What of the situation after liberation? The gold mines have been the source of so much suffering for the African people that progressives have often been tempted to think in terms of closing the industry down. Would the men who now toil in the heat, the dust and the danger underground not be more usefully employed growing food or building houses?

It is a seductive argument but it is probably not one which the people's South Africa will be able to follow. Gold is not about to disappear from the world's economic system. The strength which gold now gives to Botha's South Africa will be needed in future for the people's South Africa. As the Almighty Dollar disappears into history, gold will remain, at least throughout the transitional period towards world communism. Its possession will give the people's South Africa a responsible and important role to play in the world economy.



# THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IN ZIMBABWE

by Dumisani Ndlangamandla

John Ngara (writing on Zimbabwe in *The African Communist* No. 75) has raised a question of great significance for the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. In analysing the make-up of the current 'transitional government' of Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau, Comrade Ngara has concluded that 'the African petty bourgeoisie and those aspiring to be the same have allied themselves with the settler regime'. As a result of this, he says, the liberation movement is required to fundamentally alter its present strategy: 'it has become imperative therefore that the guerilla war be waged *pari passu* with the class struggle'. The guerilla war will now have to be waged along with a campaign to expose the class character of the collaborationists'. And this, Comrade Ngara argues, will require a restructuring of the liberation movement, which is at present 'equipped with a structure for waging a nationalist effort'.

In effect Comrade Ngara has sought to analyse the relationship between class and national factors in the developing struggle for

liberation in Zimbabwe. Quoting from *Zimbabwe News*, the official organ of the ZANU component of the Patriotic Front, he observes that 'the struggle was conceived in two stages. The first involved the defeat of the whites as agents of colonialism. The second stage appears to have been envisaged as following after the successful completion of the first — the class struggle'. Comrade Ngara concludes that 'The problem is now that the two stages have coalesced'.

The basis of this assessment rests on the alliance concluded between Smith and the African puppets. The implication is that a neo-colonialist structure has been implanted in Zimbabwe and that the resultant change in the alignment of forces requires a change in the strategy and tactics of the Zimbabwe liberation movement. It is necessary in assessing the analysis put forward by Comrade Ngara to ask what forces the African puppets represent and how their alliance with the Smith regime was produced.

Undoubtedly as Ngara points out, Muzorewa's UANC and Sithole's so-called ZANU comprise elements of the aspiring or actual African petty bourgeoisie, reactionary intelligentsia and renegades of those hues from the liberation movement. Some of the leading figures in these two parties have previous histories in the liberation struggle and some have been victims of Smith's repression of the liberation movement. Unable to withstand the pressures of the liberation struggle, most of these elements had weeded themselves out well before the dramatic escalation of the liberation struggle which followed the revolution in Portugal and the overthrow of colonialism in the Portuguese colonies. Others had no previous association with the liberation struggle and were well known as collaborators and reactionaries in Zimbabwe. They included some of the reactionary intellectuals and small businessmen now to be found in Muzorewa's UANC, the long-standing allies of the Smith regime comprising the reactionary chiefs and some small African farmers now to be found in Chirau's ZUPO.

This motley collection of self-seekers and opportunists found itself outside the mainstream of the liberation movement when, in April 1974, the Portuguese people overthrew the fascist Caetano regime and together with the liberation movements in the Portuguese territories of Africa ushered in a period of rapid advance

both in Portugal itself and in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau.

It was the developments particularly in Mozambique and Angola which activated imperialist intrigue in Southern Africa. Fearing the escalation of the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, the major imperialist powers rapidly set to work to undermine the African liberation movements. Looking around in Zimbabwe for elements which could be used to shore up the tottering Smith regime, it was not surprising that it was to the above mentioned dissidents and collaborators that they turned.

But far from intending to replace Smith with this group of renegades, the intention of the imperialists was to use them to create confusion and disunity amongst the Zimbabwean people and to weaken the liberation movement. It was hoped that with the liberation movement thus weakened the Smith regime would be able to strengthen its position and could at the same time be persuaded to make certain modifications which would serve to defend the interests of monopoly capital in the region.

### **A Short Cut to Power**

Muzorewa, Sithole and their ilk, fearing that they would be brushed aside by the advances of the liberation movement found the imperialist promises of a short cut to personal power irresistible. By the time they discovered that they were not to replace Smith but to join him they had already been caught in the net. Strenuous efforts were made by the imperialists to entice as many Zimbabweans as possible into the ranks of the renegades, and then to lead these people into the clutches of the Smith regime in the form of the 'internal agreement' of 3 March 1978.

The significance of this strategy was not limited only to Zimbabwe. As the ZAPU organ *Zimbabwe Review* commented in an editorial at the time, its essence was to buttress the racist regimes throughout Southern Africa and to undermine the liberation movements.

'The British and United States Governments are governments that rest on the economic and political forces which prop the regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa. Their diplomatic task is to reduce the embarrassment caused by the inept stooges like Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau without of

course changing the direction of the so called internal settlement whose basic elements they support. These governments are posing as arbiters of the Rhodesian and Namibian problems on the basis of trying to get everybody to participate in elections. They, like Vorster in his Bantustan homelands and Smith in his Rhodesian Constitutional apartheid homeland, are putting out every piece of argument to coax the people of Zimbabwe and convince the world that going through elections means majority rule and true independence. Rhodesia is now being used as a public relations exercise not only for its own recognition but also for the recognition of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana and other homelands once Rhodesia creates a saleable precedent.<sup>2</sup>

It was this framework of attempting to obtain recognition for the racist regime's schemes for survival which characterised the 'internal agreement'. The response of the Patriotic Front was to continue with the escalation, at all levels, of the armed liberation struggle and to place again before the people of Zimbabwe the tasks of that struggle.

Lives are not being lost in the battlefield of the Liberation Struggle just to install a black face in Government with an attached label of independence. It is the system which denies power to the masses and centres it on a privileged few which must be removed at all cost. The Patriotic Front has made it absolutely clear that independence must mean the democratisation of the entire way of life in Zimbabwe. This means that the economic and political way of life must be democratised and that the instruments of state power — the army, the civil administration, the police and the judiciary — must comprise only those persons who support that way of life. This is power to the people.<sup>3</sup>

The incorporation of the African puppets into the Smith regime did not alter the tasks of the Zimbabwe revolution. Neither did it alter the characterisation of the nature of the enemy by the Patriotic Front, as the ZAPU newspaper *Zimbabwe People's Voice* made clear in an editorial on 25 November 1978:

'Following the signing of the March 3 treachery and the effective integration of the puppet's parties within the Rhodesian Front, the African puppets are now individually and collectively part of the regime. Their status is true in the case of the war as it is in the hypothetical case of negotiations. The position of ZAPU in the Patriotic Front is that the war against fascism in Zimbabwe is between the Patriotic Front and the forces of Smith and his puppets. The defeat of Smith's forces shall be the defeat of the Rhodesian Front and its components — the sell out parties and other reactionary groupings in Zimbabwe.

And as ZAPU president, Joshua Nkomo, had made clear in declaring that 'the principal enemy of our people is not located in Africa but in

Europe and North America,<sup>3</sup> the struggle remained one directed against imperialism and colonial settler rule. Another *Zimbabwe People's Voice* editorial commented:

Following the incontrovertible fact that the Zimbabwe problem results from colonialism and imperialism, the Zimbabwe Revolution is therefore anti colonial and anti imperialist. This orientation of the struggle affords a clarity of issues both internally and externally. The enemy at both these levels having been identified it therefore becomes the task of the Revolution to work towards its defeat comprehensively.<sup>4</sup>

Far from creating new forces, the 'internal agreement' attempted to cobble together some black faces for attachment to the Smith regime, which remained the basic agent of imperialism in Zimbabwe.

In this context one needs to ask how successful imperialism has been in catching the 'African petty bourgeoisie and those aspiring to be the same' in its net? Prior to the 'internal agreement' the imperialists had some initial success precisely because they were able to camouflage their actual intentions, and to create the illusion that they would dislodge the Smith regime and hand power to an African government. When the reality became apparent Muzorewa and Sithole rapidly began losing what little support they had managed to obtain.

At the same time the strength and prestige of the Patriotic Front has been growing apace, as its ability to challenge the Smith regime on the battlefield has increased. This process has sharply identified the opposing forces in Zimbabwe – the colonial settler Smith regime and its puppets representing the interests of imperialism on one hand, and the Zimbabwean people led by their liberation movement on the other. In this situation it is not surprising that the vacillating sections of the African petty bourgeoisie, including some who had initially supported one or other of the puppets, find themselves increasingly drawn towards the forces of liberation which are rapidly gaining the upper hand.

It should also not be forgotten that the Smith regime is at war with the black people of Zimbabwe, and that a UANC membership card won't prevent a racist soldier from shooting you if you happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, irrespective of the 'internal agreement'. With the war currently claiming close to 50 lives a day,

the vast majority being non-combatant black people, the fascistic nature of the Smith regime can hardly be thought to have been camouflaged by the 'internal agreement'.

These developments have led to a growing crisis within the dwindling ranks of the puppet parties. The internal disaffection and the increasing defections to the Patriotic Front are most recently illustrated by the expulsion of five leading members of Muzorewa's UANC, four of whom fled the country following the murder of the fifth, the Rev. Kanoderoka, who before his death had clashed openly with Muzorewa and his lieutenants. Without any support from the masses and with their leadership engaged in rival assassinations the puppets have turned to the fascist methods of their master, Ian Smith, utilising the murderous Selous Scouts to create their so-called private armies in a final futile effort to terrorise the Zimbabwean people into acquiescence. All of this only increases the isolation of the remaining puppet placemen whose continued survival is clearly dependent only on the protection of the Smith regime. Having lost their earlier facade of independence the puppets can now be easily seen for what they are — appendages of the Smith regime.

### **The Revolutionary Forces**

On the side of the revolutionary forces one needs to look at the current composition of the liberation movement and the social forces it represents, in the context of the concrete objectives which it has set itself. The eradication of colonialism and the establishment of a democratic state remains the fundamental and stated objective of the Patriotic Front — in other words the successful completion of the national democratic revolution. This objective requires the consolidation of the unity and mobilisation of the broadest mass of the Zimbabwean people. The class forces participating in this task (and whose interests are served by the national democratic revolution) are the workers and peasants, the revolutionary intellectuals and the patriotic small business people. That such are the people sacrificing in the liberation struggle is evidenced by a glance through the occupations of those appearing before the regime's courts on charges relating to the liberation struggle, or in the communiques issued in Salisbury of the victims of Smith's terrorist forces.



In this context I would draw attention to the contrast between Comrade Nkomo's rather hasty dismissal of the 'African elite', and the well considered analysis of Africa's revolutionary forces and alliances offered by the document 'A Communist Call to Africa', drawn up by African Communist and workers' parties and published in *The African Communist* No. 75.

This document draws attention to 'the process of urbanisation (which) has also led to the marked numerical growth of the middle and some transitional strata which includes elements dislocated from the rural areas, small traders, artisans, office workers and intellectuals'. The importance of this group in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere, is suggested in the document

'These strata also take part with varying degrees of intensity in the struggle for democracy and national and social progress. It is from these strata that such an influential force as revolutionary democrats more or less clearly shaped is emerging, and which in socialist oriented countries (in Africa) controls state power'. (p. 12).

Whilst the working class in Zimbabwe is increasingly playing its leading role in the liberation struggle, it remains relatively small and in some respects undeveloped. In these circumstances the role of the revolutionary democrats is of vital importance and their participation in the struggle for national and social progress is, if anything, heightened by the conditions of national oppression in Zimbabwe, and the requirements of the national democratic revolution. Moreover, whilst the complex processes in the unfolding liberation struggle in Zimbabwe cannot be overlooked, the basic characterisation of the stage of the struggle is clear. Once again 'The Communist Call to Africa' offers a timely warning.

'Today it is not the socialist revolution but the national democratic revolution that is on the agenda in most African countries. All the progressive forces must defend it against imperialism and reaction. At the same time there is a need to come out resolutely against ultra leftish forestalling of developments, against the infantile disorder' of leaping across historically vital stages and against a neglect of immediate general democratic tasks, whose fulfilment constitutes the essence of the present African revolution and a necessary stage of transition on the road to socialist revolution'. (p. 24).

This is not to argue against *socialist orientation*. Indeed as the same document makes clear 'Only socialist orientation will assure

success in reaching these objectives through ever closer unity of all democratic and progressive forces' That a *socialist orientation* is increasingly guiding the ideology of the Patriotic Front is quite clear. But it is precisely the scientific application of the laws of Marx and Lenin which argues against attempts at artificial acceleration of the transition to the struggle for socialism, and for the development in the liberation struggle of the broadest anti imperialist alliance of revolutionary democratic forces.

The struggle for national liberation in Zimbabwe is intricately tied to the struggle for social liberation. Indeed there can be no real national liberation in Zimbabwe without the redistribution of power and wealth to the people. As ZAPU president, Joshua Nkomo pointed out in an interview with the ANC organ *Sechaba*

The first step will be to build a new nation — and not reviving the imperialist, colonialist, capitalist state that prevails there today. And we are going to create a people's state where the emphasis will be on man not on material gain for a few. In a free Zimbabwe all production and the means of production would be owned by the people, to produce for the people and not to enrich just a few, as it is at present'.<sup>b</sup>

It is the current struggle for a national democratic revolution in Zimbabwe, for people's power, that is forging conditions on the battlefield and on every front which make possible the creation of a future society in Zimbabwe free from exploitation in all its forms. It is the mobilisation and politicisation of the masses of Zimbabwe which will lay the foundations for socialism in Zimbabwe. Against this armed and politically conscious force of Zimbabwe revolutionaries, the Muzorewas and Sitholes will certainly crumble when their master falls, if not before.

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# **AFRICA: NOTES AND COMMENT**

**by Vukani Mawethu**

## **Ugandan-Tanzanian Conflict:**

On October 30, 1978, between 2,000 and 3,000 Ugandan troops, supported by tanks and heavy artillery, entered Tanzanian territory. This was followed by Ugandan reports that Uganda had pushed its border with Tanzania to the Kagera River, thus annexing 710 square miles of Tanzanian territory 'in retaliation for the recent alleged Tanzanian invasion of Uganda'. The new area, it was announced, would eventually be administered as a Ugandan district 'although for the present it would be a military zone'.

The whole problem dates back to colonial times when Britain which colonised Uganda fixed the boundaries with Germany which had occupied Tanganyika before the First World War. This military confrontation is the fiercest since the virtual collapse of the East African Community after the overthrow of former Ugandan President Milton Obote by Amin in 1971. Since then President

Ugandan exiles resident in Tanzania attempted to overthrow Amin.

It has been reported that in the Ugandan army there is a lot of dissatisfaction and unrest, even mutiny attempts. The economy is in a shambles: coffee provides 90 per cent of Uganda's foreign exchange earnings, but the price has fallen from £4,232 a ton to £1,424.

After some heavy fighting Amin announced on November 14 that he had ordered his troops to withdraw from Tanzania, and he invited the OAU and the Arab League to send observers to witness the withdrawal. It is said that 40,000 refugees — out of the area's known population of 50,000 — had made their way to the safety of the south bank of the Kagera River. The fate of the remaining 10,000 was still under investigation. Appeals for restoration of peace from the chairman of the OAU, President Numeiry of Sudan, and from Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Algeria were not successful.

The question arises: why should African states quarrel over borders which were created by colonialists? Does the Charter of the OAU not recognise the national boundaries inherited from colonialism?

What affects us directly is the fact that this conflict takes place at a crucial moment in the history of our people. The *New Nigerian* of November 9, 1978, stated that this invasion of Tanzania 'comes as a serious distraction in view of the escalating tension in Southern Africa. If there was ever a time when African countries needed to pull their resources together to rid the continent of racism and colonialism, it is now. While it is inexcusable for any two African countries to be embroiled in a fratricidal dispute, it is even more inopportune to do so with Ian Smith and Pieter Botha waiting in the wings . . .

No African leader should be allowed to get away with a breach on our volatile Southern flank'.

The Rhodesian raids on Zambia are a serious threat to African independence and Angola is threatened by the South African racists. The invasion of Tanzania by Uganda at this time is inexcusable. This is one of Africa's most futile wars. We need to pay more attention to the needs of the people rather than engaging innocent people — workers and peasants — in futile wars.

## **Houari Boumedienne — Departure of a great African**

1978 ended with the departure of a great African, a man who contributed so much to the making of Africa's recent past and present which is characterised by the determination of the masses of our people to rid the continent of the scourge of colonialism, racism and apartheid. That man was Houari Boumedienne.

Born in 1927 in the village of Guelma near Algeria's border with Tunisia, Houari Boumedienne — his real name was Muhammad Boukharraba — went to University in Tunis and then to Cairo's Al Azhar, the Islamic world's most important seat of learning. In Cairo he made his first steps into politics. By 1954 he had already taken the nom de guerre of Boumedienne and fought in the Algerian war of liberation from French colonialism — the eight year war which cost Algeria more than a million dead, two million interned and half a million exiled in Tunisia and Morocco. Boumedienne was chief of staff of the Army of National Liberation.

When Algeria became independent in 1962 the NLF was faced with new problems — agrarian reform, industrialisation, state control of foreign trade and domestic means of distribution, introduction of free education and medicine and the adoption of the National Charter and a constitution. The NLF which had rallied the Algerians for war was now called upon to play a dynamic and leading role in times of peace. This was well understood by Boumedienne who became President on June 19, 1965. He guided the people's political energies in anti-imperialist directions. He modernised Algeria and fought for the unity of the Arab and Kabyle people which was an aspect of a broader question of the unity of the African and Arab people.

Boumedienne understood that the independence of Algeria is meaningless if Algeria is not rooted in the world wide anti-imperialist front. His anti-imperialist stand manifested itself in his support for the West Saharan people under the leadership of Polisario — much to the dislike of King Hassan of Morocco. He also supported Chad's Frolinat. He went beyond that. In 1973 Algeria hosted the Non-Aligned Conference.

Algeria became more vocal on the question of the new economic order demanding an economic and political equation between the

industrialised world and the less developed countries. Algeria's stand on the Middle East question and on Southern African has been characterised by consistent anti-imperialism, anti Zionism, anti racism and anti-colonialism.

The death of Houari Boumedienne has been a great loss for our continent, the OAU, the national liberation movements and all anti imperialist forces throughout the world.

Hamba Kahle, Boumedienne!

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### **Western Sahara: New Developments and new Problems**

Towards the end of 1978 two events which are of great significance for political developments in the Sahara conflict took place. In June 1978 the Mauritanian President Moktar Ould Daddah was overthrown by a military committee led by Lt Col Mustapha Ould Salek and three months later the Polisario Front held its fourth congress at a site known as Oued Nasr.

The rapidly evolving political and military developments in the region led to the reappraisal of the situation by the Polisario Front. It called for Mauritanian recognition of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, the ceding to them of the 'Mauritanian portion' of the former Spanish colony and the withdrawal of Mauritanian troops to pre war frontiers. It should be remembered that Polisario has declared a ceasefire in Mauritania but not in Morocco or the sector of the Western Sahara it occupies.

Talking about the Moroccan presence in the Western Sahara, it should be noted that 8,000 Moroccan troops have been based in Mauritania since 1977. They were scheduled to return to Morocco before the end of March. They were spread throughout Western Sahara. 1,200 Moroccans at Nouadhibou, the economic capital of Mauritania; the remainder based around Zouerate, the iron mining centre (the railway line linking it to the sea has been an object of repeated and successful attacks by Polisario), as well as Atar, Bir-Moghrein and Aiu Bentih. They were also to be found at Dakhla and Argoub in the Southern Western Sahara, at present controlled by Mauritania.



The conflict in Mauritania is an old one but in 1975, when Spain signed the Madrid Agreement handing over its ex-colony to Morocco and Mauritania, the situation became worse. What complicates issues is that Spain holds the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on Moroccan territory and Algeria has been the headquarters of the Canary archipelago liberation front MPALAC which is fighting for the islands independence from Spain. Algeria supports Polisario. France on the other hand has been wholly involved in the struggle against Polisario. In other words, the Polisario Front is fighting against Morocco, Mauritania, Spain and France.

Recently there have been shifts in the attitude of the two European states Spain and France. The presence of a representative of the Spanish government, Sr. Ruperez, at the Congress of Polisario meant not only a de facto recognition of the Front by Spain, but also that Adolfo Suarez' Centrist Party is adopting a 'more balanced approach'. The French government has been putting forward a proposal for a 'Saharan mini state which could eventually be federated with Mauritania' an idea which was rejected by Polisario as a 'new Palestine'. As for Mauritania, it is said that 'discreet sporadic negotiations with the Polisario Front have continued for the last six months'.

Colonel Salek, the Mauritanian head of state, has announced that he would be prepared to allow the Saharan people inhabiting the 'Mauritanian portion of Western Sahara' to determine their own future by referendum and he envisages the future role of Mauritania as that of an arbiter and balance between Morocco and Algeria.

It is said that the Polisario Front has requested full negotiations with the Mauritanian government on the matter, before any election is embarked upon. 'There could be nothing more damaging to their cause than the acquisition of a mere half of what is rightfully theirs'.

Polisario has been active in the military field. the 90km conveyor belt which carried the phosphate from Bou Craa to El Airen has been attacked and cut by the Polisario guerillas on a number of occasions.

the latest being shortly after New Year when the Front's 'Houari Boumedienne campaign' against Morocco was intensified.

But what is more difficult is the diplomatic and political aspect of the struggle. The OAU appointed five heads of state to find a solution to the issue one of them, President Sekou Toure, went to

Morocco recently on an official visit to discuss the conflict. What is perhaps more important is direct contact with Polisario which has direct communication with the masses and is therefore in a better position to voice their aspirations

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## **Central African Empire: Bokassa in Trouble**

The January students' protests in Bangui were caused by students' disapproval of uniforms imposed upon them and by Bokassa's irresponsibility. The Emperor asked for help from his friends Zaire and France. Troops from Zaire arrived in big numbers and the Emperor's intelligence was active.

Although this students' 'riot' was not given wide publicity, the Emperor felt obliged to address the nation in Sangho, the most widely spoken language in the country, rather than in French. The troops were confined to barracks.

The conflict over uniforms and other restrictions is an aspect of a broader problem – no wonder that the students were joined by other sections of the community who live on the outskirts of Bangui. The economic hardships, the failure of the cotton and coffee crops and the political indignities imposed upon the population by the Emperor are some of the causes. (The Emperor, since his 'coronation' in December 1977, has been confined in the palace in Berengo, 80 kilometres from Bangui, the capital).

These problems have a deep social content – the swiftness with which the demonstrations spread and the brutality of the army and police indicate that more than students' problems was involved. The very fact that the Emperor, Bokassa, addressed the nation in Sangho and not in French which is understood by the students (and not by the people) indicates the depth of the problems.

Emperor Bokassa has disclaimed any direct responsibility – 'the Prime Minister is now head of Government'. But he holds several portfolios in the cabinet in which two Frenchmen with the portfolios of Finance and Justice are to be found. Bokassa has kept his army in Bouar outside Bangui and the Emperor, an army man, wants to keep the army 'out of politics'.

This is one of his weaknesses, especially because his intelligentsia and the army play such an important role in African politics

# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE BARREL OF A GUN?

**Armies and Politics** by Jack Woddis Published by Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1977. Price £6.00

Jack Woddis, who heads the International Department of the Communist Party of Great Britain, is no newcomer to African revolutionaries. In the past he has made a number of valuable contributions to the problems and perspectives of the African revolutionary process, notably in books such as *An Introduction to Neo-Colonialism, Africa, the Way Ahead, Africa, the Lion Awakes,* and *Africa, the Roots of Revolt*

*Armies and Politics* deals with the role of armies in the political life of a country, particularly at moments of acute socio-economic crisis. Not only is armed intervention a feature of the underdeveloped countries, but equally, if only with less persistence, in the capitalist states of Western Europe. In Africa no less than 32 coups, attempted coups and counter coups took place between 1963 and 1968 with a further 18 since then. In Asia 42 coups occurred

between 1945 and 1972, whilst Latin America was the scene of 68 army take-overs in 17 different countries in the period between 1943 and 1962. Similarly, capitalist Europe in the wake of its crisis, generated by the October Revolution in Russia, the Second World War and the growing assaults by the working class and anti-monopoly forces, witnessed a number of repressive regimes maintained or established in power by the direct and indirect role of the military. Italy (1922), Germany (1918 and 1933), Portugal (1926), Spain (1936) and Greece (1967) all experienced the ascent to power of fascist dictatorships based on the reactionary alliance between the forces of monopoly capitalism and the military.

The scope and role of these interventions by the armies vary considerably from country to country and even within the same country at different times. Whilst the vast number of coups have been on the side of reaction, capitalist rule and close relations with international imperialism, some have espoused the cause of popular democracy and social progress. The fascist dictatorship of Salazar captured state power in Portugal in 1926 with the direct connivance of the Portuguese army. But in 1974 it was the Portuguese army which overthrew fascist rule in Portugal, purged the armed forces of its most reactionary elements, ended 500 years of Portuguese colonialism in Africa and aligned itself with the democratic forces. In 1952 the Free Officers Movement within the Egyptian armed forces overthrew reaction and feudalism in Egypt and attempted to set that country on the high road of economic and social emancipation under the leadership of Nasser. Today the leadership of that army headed by Sadat has ignominiously capitulated to Israeli aggression and American imperialism.

The army therefore can be a force for reaction or against it. It can be on the side of liberation or oppression.

What are the determinants of the role of the armed forces? What is the totality of circumstances and conditions, internal and external, which determines whether the army will stand on the side of reaction or progress? In what circumstances do coups succeed and why do they fail? Can coups be 'progressive'? Can the army be won for socialism? What should the approach of the democratic, anti-monopoly, communist parties and liberation movements be to the army?

These are crucial questions precisely because historic experience confirms the view that the army is not a *static* social force touched with 'original sin' in a way that, no matter what, it will always come out in support of reaction. Neither is the military neutral and 'above society', for when it does intervene in the political struggle between opposed social and class forces it does so as an ally of one or other of these forces, whether it seizes state power itself or whether it maintains the existing ruling class in power or assists in its overthrow. Military intervention therefore is a continuation of the class and national struggle in a different form.

Which side the armed forces take at a specific juncture of the struggle between the contending forces cannot be a matter of conjecture ('we think that . . .') nor a matter of crude ultra left wing anti militarism ('the army is reactionary, it will always side with reaction') *but depends ultimately on the balance of the political forces ranged against each other*. This, according to Woddis, is the key and he goes on to say:

'Political power grows out of the total political alignment of forces including the strength and organisation of the people. It is this which, in the last resort, determines if, when and *in what direction* the guns are going to be used' (Page 23)

Elaborating on this, Woddis uses the examples of the Sudan (1964, when the army refused to crush the general strike, which primarily was the cause of the downfall of the reactionary regime of General Abboud), and Portugal (1974, when the army overthrew the fascist dictatorship of Caetano).

'And when the civilian population in both cases showed in no uncertain terms that it wanted to do away with the old system, *when similar influences had worked their way into the armed forces* (my emphasis), and when the most reactionary officers could no longer obtain obedience to their command if they tried to uphold the Government of the day, then the machine of the institutionalised force was no longer available to the rulers. It was politics that had the last word'.

And again,

'The men were armed. They were trained and led by capable officers. But neither the soldiers nor the officers were instruments or machines. They were thinking individuals, subject even if in different ways, *to the self same influences and political considerations that affect the thinking and behaviour of those not in uniform*' (my emphasis). (Page 26)

The role that the armed forces will play at a given time therefore reflects the total political situation then prevailing, in particular the role of the *mass* of the people — their actions, organisations and aspirations. The process whereby the army is so influenced by the social and political transformations in society is however not spontaneous, and

'Revolutionaries, if they are to succeed in their aims, need to *develop a policy* to hasten this process, and influence the future actions of the armed forces'. (Page 97, my emphasis)

Central to Woddis therefore is a two-fold strategy of winning over the armed forces

(a) a policy and strategy for winning over a decisive majority of the people for radical change.

(b) a policy and strategy for winning the army over to the side of the majority and its aspirations.

The success of these strategies will ensure the ascent of the popular majority to state political power *without a bloody civil war*. In brief, (a) means a wide alliance of the left parties with all the democratic and anti-monopoly forces in society, and (b) requires the complete democratisation of the armed forces — including the struggle for democratic political rights for them, i.e.

'the right to belong to political parties, attend political meetings, read political newspapers and literature etc.'

the battle for the soul of the army is a necessary part of the struggle for a radical transformation of society' (Page 300).

In relation to both these strategic tasks Woddis represents the view of the CPGB as well as like-minded European Communist Parties, especially the CP of Italy and the CP of France from whose programmes and statements he quotes extensively, and who have chosen the parliamentary, non-insurrectionary road to state political power.

Given such a strategy, two questions, posed by Soviet social scientist Professor Sobelev and quoted by Woddis, need to be answered:

(a) *how* is it possible to bring about fundamental changes in the state in its totality, especially in the armed forces and police, in such a way that the democratic, anti-monopoly alliance can bring about progressive and radical changes in the socio economic structure and



relationships of society as a whole, *without counter-revolution being able to use these state institutions to block such changes?*  
and

(b) *in the transition period*, when full state power is not yet in the hands of the revolutionary forces, how can the resistance, often by violence and sabotage, of the class enemy be prevented or crushed? Woddis provides the answers to these questions by reference to the experience of President Allende's Popular Unity Government in Chile:

'By extending its base through winning decisive sections of the middle strata, and by mobilising its forces for activity, Popular Unity would have had the best chance to influence the army not to act, and if, despite Popular Unity's wider support and effective organising of the people, the army had struck, the strength of the divisions that would have been expressed *within it*, combined with the *majority support* that Popular Unity would have won, would have provided the best opportunities for the coup to have been effectively resisted and overcome' (My emphasis Page 207)

As we well know Popular Unity's attempts to win this *decisive majority* were thwarted by internal reaction fueled by the big American monopolies, the CIA and the Nixon Administration, and this gave the Pinochet-led clique in the Chilean armed forces the pretext to stage its murderous coup. Inherent therefore in Woddis's answer and the strategy he proposes is this that the left democratic and anti-monopoly alliance should not form a government of its own and win decisive state power, without a *decisive majority* in the country. If the armed forces then mount a counter-revolution (and this possibility still exists as the above quotation reveals) the popular forces would be able to resist it much more effectively because of the divisions in the armed forces which will inevitably arise then.

*How and by what means* still remains unanswered. Clearly the option open to the progressive forces in such circumstances is precisely the use of force to suppress and crush the armed resistance of the reactionary forces. To rule out such an option from the outset or during the transition period seems fatal, as the Chilean Communist Party has concluded

Even if we do not agree with all the conclusions Woddis reaches, this book is an important contribution to our understanding of the role of the armed forces and our approach to this key component of

the state. It lays bare the scope and character of a number of important coups in the last 15 years (Sudan, Ghana, Indonesia, Chile and Portugal) often using unpublished source material as a means of identifying the nature of the problem as well as to provide answers to it.

*Armies and Politics* cannot simply be read. It has to be studied and discussed. Its value lies in the depth of the analysis which Woddis brings to bear on the problem and its possible solution. Although the strategies Woddis proposes are directed primarily at the European Left and indeed reflect their policies, African, Asian and Latin American revolutionaries will find tremendous value in it.

G. Singh

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## **CLASS FORCES IN THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE**

**Revolutionary Pressures in Africa** by Claude Ake  
Published by Zed Press, 1978. Price £6.50

According to the preface, the book examines the 'dynamics of social forces in Africa with particular attention to whether the social forces are generating revolutionary pressures or whether, instead, they are consolidating the status quo'. The thesis is that 'on balance the objective conditions are such that their dynamics are moving Africa towards socialist revolution'.

In going about to prove his thesis the author divides the world into two classes. In the 'contemporary world economy', he says, 'countries (as agents of production) are divided into those who possess instruments of labour and those who essentially possess only labour'. These countries are engaged in ever increasing struggle and this results in revolutionary pressures in Africa. This assertion therefore confines the global struggle within the framework of capitalism and ignores completely the growing influence of the socialist countries in the struggle against imperialism in favour of the struggles of the African people against colonialism, racism and neo colonialism.

There is, however, an in depth exposition of how neo colonialism manifests itself in Africa and useful statistics to prove this. The role of the multinational corporations is also very clearly exposed. The role of the African bourgeoisie is also well stated — i.e. its collusion with imperialist agencies. But what is astonishing is that the author proposes that to solve the problems presented by the process of neo colonialism 'the African bourgeoisie must destroy capitalism itself, thereby committing suicide as a class'. Alternatively, 'not to solve it, is to foster the conditions for their revolutionary liquidation'. This they must do by radicalising the masses in opposition to imperialism. Here lies a contradiction in terms of the interests already exposed and the machinations of monopolies to preserve their exploitation of Africa.

In the chapter on the class struggle in Africa, two categories of exploiters are defined as follows:

- (a) 'Exploiters by class situation' — those who own the means of production and employ wage labour.
- (b) 'Exploiters by class position' — those who do not own the means of production but, because of their involvement in administration, maintain conditions for exploitation. These are 'officer corps of the armed forces and the police, high ranking civil servants, employees of parasitical bodies and university teachers'.
- (c) The rest are the urban workers and peasants.

This 'class analysis' creates confusion, particularly in having to identify correctly the class forces in the struggle against imperialism and methods to be employed in mobilising for this struggle. Hence it is not surprising that the author suggests or concludes that the urban workers cannot be relied upon in this class struggle, because they have something to lose — the comfort of being urban dwellers. He further suggests that the peasants are the most reliable revolutionary class, because they have nothing to lose from the overthrow of imperialism and neo colonialism. He supports his argument by citing countries like Vietnam, China, Cuba which he says were not highly industrialised. The peasantry was in the majority and therefore socialist revolutions were successful there.

In conclusion the author suggests that in Africa there are various possibilities of social development. One is that a capitalist revolution might intensify and consolidate this system in Africa, but he gives no

clear reasons for this. Two further trends of development are possible and these are socialism or barbarism. There is also a suggestion that an historic possibility which lies before Africa is a march to fascism which would be brought about by economic stagnation.

The main weaknesses of the book are that most conclusions drawn by the author have a wrong basis and, although he applies Marxist categories, he tends to advance his own theses in the exposition of the problems facing Africa. Those who read the book and want to understand its weaknesses and dangers should read also the document *Communist Call to Africa* (*The African Communist*, No. 75).

Ngcambaza Khumalo

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## **THE TASKS OF THE OAU**

**The Unfinished Quest for Unity**, by Zdenek Cervenka, Julian Friedmann Publishers, London 1977. Price £7.50

The Organisation of African Unity was formed in Addis Ababa on May 25, 1963 — the day now regarded internationally as Africa Day — and since then the organisation has developed into one of the largest continental bodies of its kind. This was a period of 'growing expectations' when African countries had just gained independence and the first generation of African heads of state met to discuss unity and freedom from colonialism. Nkrumah, Nasser, Ben Bella, Nyerere, Modibo Keita, Haile Selassie were among the founding fathers of the OAU. On that day excellent speeches were delivered and Ben Bella expressed the feelings of all those present when he said that

'This charter will remain a dead letter unless we take concrete decisions, unless we lend unconditional support to the peoples of Angola, of South Africa, of Mozambique and others, unconditional support which these peoples still under the colonialist yoke are entitled to expect from us. Let us all agree to die a little so that the people still under colonial domination may be free and African Unity may not be a vain word.'

Since that historic day the OAU has grown in size and strength. This process has not been without contradictions, inter state conflicts and problems of national formation.

The question of African unity cannot be divorced from the practical political struggle going on in and around Africa, more so that the main question is not the unity of the Africans, but their national liberation and social emancipation. Factors which cannot be ignored in this respect are the weakness of the African working class and the incomplete formation of classes, as well as the existence of pre-capitalist formations — factors which enhance the traditional thinking amongst the non proletarian sections of African society. The influence of bourgeois and social democratic theories and of African (at times ethnic) nationalism is strong in Africa and this is combined with the attempt to deny the existence of classes and class theory in Africa. The African bourgeoisie attempt to deny that they constitute a class on the grounds that 'we are all Africans'. There are also genuine revolutionaries who overestimate the revolutionary potential of the peasantry.

What about the thesis of 'non alignment'? This political position is acceptable in so far as it is directed against imperialism, but there arose in some circles of the national bourgeoisie an illusion that there was a possibility of using the cold war so as to remain outside the international class struggle. This is typical of the foreign policy of the national bourgeoisie of some Afro Asian states. The reformism inherent in this thesis is the false orientation against communism but not against imperialism, and the dangerous isolation of genuine Afro-Asian revolutionaries from the world-wide revolutionary movement.

These are the main issues which face the OAU yet Zdenek Cervenka does not even touch on them. On the contrary, his book is descriptive, flat and suggests nothing of the solution to African problems. What it does is give us an account of what has been happening within the OAU; to his credit, the facts and figures about the different members of the OAU and the Charter of the OAU etc are useful.

What perhaps needs to be emphasised is that African unity today means the liberation of Southern Africa and the economic emancipation of the independent African states from neo colonialism — a gigantic task. Which forces and classes are in a position to liberate and therefore unite Africa? This question needs to be answered by all African revolutionaries. Lunga Modise

## IS THE PRESS AN ALLY?

### **South Africa: The Press and the Politics of Liberation**

by Chenhamo C. Chimutengwende, Barbican Books London. Price £4.95.

This is rather a pretentious book, and by no stretch of imagination fulfils its promise 'to explore the political implications of the process of dissemination of information'. One weakness is its lack of clear ideological framework — on what the forces behind 'oppression' are, for instance, and what forces the liberatory organisations represent — and another the academic format of the book, which bears the marks of a thesis written for university requirements, without including very much detailed original research of the kind that might be of special interest to *African Communist* readers. However, it is a useful source of reference on such matters as the laws governing the South African press (listed and summarised); and readership figures for South African newspapers (unfortunately not broken down, by class or race, though such breakdowns have to the reviewer's knowledge been available for past years).

The author's main conclusions are essentially simple — that the press in Southern Africa is essentially in the hands of the oppressor (he rightly dismisses the theory, sometimes upheld in South Africa, that the press in some way constitutes a 'democratic opposition' to white tyranny), that it can be useful to liberatory movements nevertheless, to the extent that it continues to spread information (we miss a closer analysis here) — eg about black political activity — that is read by blacks, but that the first duty of liberatory movements is to develop their own media of communication, however basic pamphlets, wall slogans, word of mouth.

I would have liked to see much more, and much more up to date (the main text seems to have been written in 1977) detail on exactly who owns and controls the white press, on how the press works in the interest of class rule (including quotations from newspapers, radio bulletins etc), and on the history of black journalism in South Africa and Rhodesia, which the author refers to but does not elaborate on — he is in fact stronger on Zimbabwe, which is his country. And I would particularly have liked to see some analysis of the impact of



television in South Africa, and its possible implications for the future — here the author again makes reference, but adds that at the time of writing in 1977, the service had not been in operation long enough for analysis. Finally, I would have liked to see the author's ideas about how liberatory movements can set up their own information media elaborated in more imaginative detail, perhaps based on experience in other countries?

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## **A STORY OF RESISTANCE**

### **Time of the Butcherbird**

by Alex La Guma (Heinemann, 1979), 95p

Alex La Guma has never shied away from using his art as a political weapon — as a means of heightening consciousness, both of the destructiveness of apartheid and of the need for it to be destroyed.

His commitment could hardly be otherwise. Jimmy La Guma, his father, was a leading member of the Communist Party of South Africa. Alex himself joined as soon as he was old enough. This revolutionary commitment — sustained throughout his adult years in South Africa despite fierce repression, including several periods of imprisonment, house arrest, and continuous personal deprivation and sacrifice for himself and his family — has not left him with much time to write. His novels, of which the present is the 5th, have all been crisp and concise, distilling the essence of experience of tyranny and having the instant thermal effect of undiluted alcohol.

It has not been easy for La Guma to persist with his writing in London. Physically cut off from his daily source of inspiration an artist must draw increasingly on his reservoir of memories while keeping in touch with fresh developments through his political involvement.

The dual character of artistic engagement — the dialectic between experience in real life and its transfiguration into the fantasy situation of story-telling — was a controversial issue at a unique gathering in Amsterdam during May 1976. Alex La Guma presided there over a 4 day conference of 30 exiled South African

cultural workers — writers, poets, dramatists, artists, singers and musicians who had converged on Holland from their various points of dispersal in Europe, Africa and America.

'The dynamic of the South African people', La Guma stated, 'will always be represented . . . by the writings of those who do not fear to reflect real struggle, that is the struggle to overthrow white supremacy, not merely nibble at the fringes, lagging behind the inevitable advance'.

While all participants were in harmony about the need to combat apartheid through political action, not all were convinced that creative drive could be sustained indefinitely in exile unless it began to draw upon the artist's adopted soil for nourishment with the object then of producing for the foster community.

Clearly there can be no general rules about this — so much depends upon the individual's degree of commitment to the national liberation struggle. But after 12 years of exile wrestling with the problems of a new and often inhospitable environment La Guma has produced in *The Time of the the Butcherbird* a story which will move and help to motivate oppressed South Africans whatever their geographical disposition.

It will also serve to raise the level of understanding of our struggle internationally. La Guma's new novel is the inside story, the humanization of the bald facts of perhaps the greatest atrocity of apartheid — the forcible removal and resettlement of whole communities as a necessary part of the oppressive system. This story with its insight could not have come at a more propitious moment. There has been increasing public focus on the plight of the people of Crossroads 'squatter' settlement near Cape Town and the massive 'squatter' settlements in the vicinity of Pretoria.

These communities constitute a direct threat to the very foundation of apartheid, and like the community in La Guma's story bravely defy government laws, heartless officials and brutal police. *Time of the Butcherbird* is about the people who insist on human rights and dignity in the face of appalling and calculated inhumanity, an inhumanity which must eventually be forcibly extirpated. It is also about those in the camp of the oppressor who are caught up in the intricate network of oppression — the small cogs without which the big wheel could not turn.

This book is a microcosmic view of the South African conflict. It is an accurate, evocative picture of the effect of a relentlessly exploitative system on the peoples of South Africa. La Guma presents with a painter's eye the tones and textures of people and landscape as in this opening paragraph to the story.

"The dust hung in the sky for some time before settling down on the white plain. The plain was flat and featureless except for two roads bull-dozed from the ground, bisecting each other to lie like scars of a branded cross on the pocked and powdered skin of the earth. In the distance a new water tank on metal stilts jutted like an iron glove clenched against the flat and empty sky . . . This was no land for ploughing and sowing: it was not even good enough to be buried in. The people stood in the afternoon burn of the molten-metal sun, the scorching air turning the sweat and dust to plaster on their faces'.

Alex La Guma received the Lotus prize for literature in 1973 from the Afro-Asian Writers' Association. His recent appointment as ANC representative in Havana is another tribute to his work. These honours are evidence of the indivisibility of his art and politics.

It is perhaps in Cuba that La Guma will be inspired to write his next story about South Africa.

Scarlet Whitman

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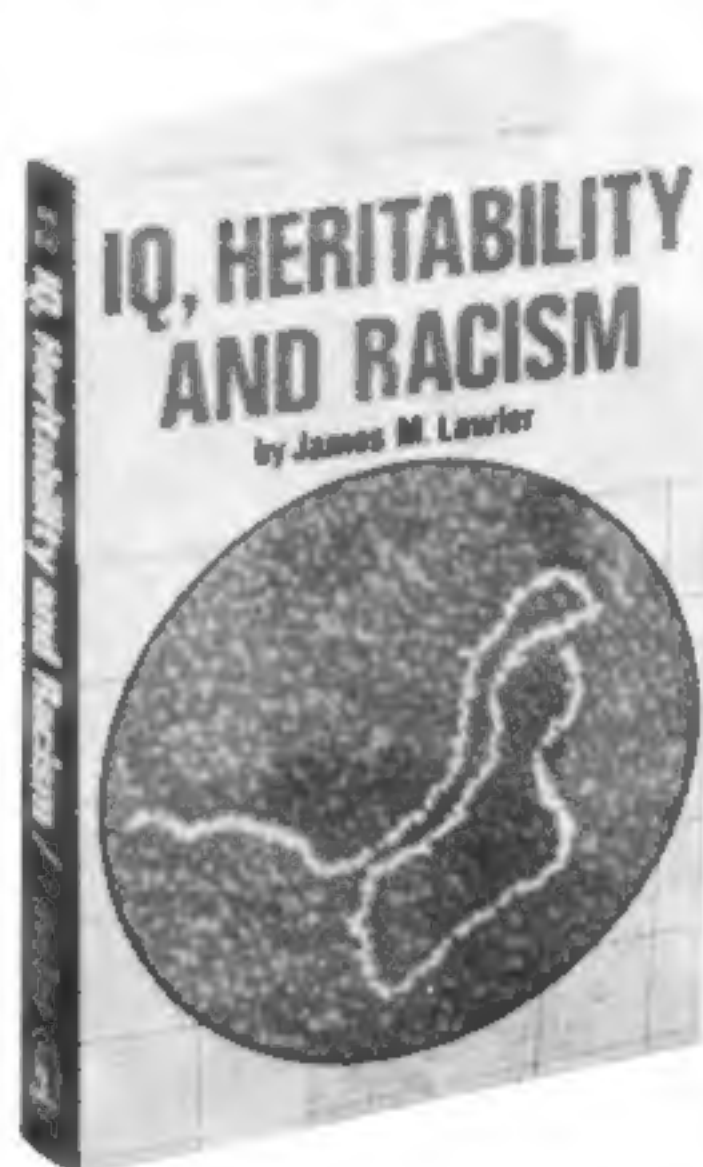
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